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GREAT MEN AT PLAY

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# GREAT MEN AT PLAY

BY

T. F. THISELTON DYER

TWO VOLUMES

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## PREFACE.

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It is only natural that the domestic life of every great man should be a matter of deep interest to the world at large. As leading actors in the grand drama of public fame, our eminent men must necessarily hold a foremost place in our social history. Hence it is only a justifiable curiosity which seeks to know more about them when "out of harness," at play, and in their own homes.

It was a suggestive idea of this kind incidentally mentioned in the *Times* a few years ago, that prompted the compilation of the present work, which, it is hoped, will make the public more thoroughly acquainted with many of those celebrated men whose tastes, habits, and other personal traits of character, have never hitherto been systematically collected.

But, while a work of this kind—so wide is its subject—must be at its best merely fragmentary, and contain much that is already known to biographers and critics, it is hoped that, as a popular book, and written for the public, it will meet with favour and interest. Should this be the case, the Author intends to continue the subject on a future occasion.

T. F. THISELTON DYER.

May 6th, 1889.







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THE remark of Henry IV. to the Spanish  
Ambassador, when he discovered the king riding  
round the room on a stick with his son, is well



known—"You are a father, Signor Ambassador, and so we will finish our ride." This is one of those numerous little incidents which show that even monarchs are not unlike other mortals, but can enter into childish games. It reminds us how Cardinal de Richelieu was one day found jumping with his servants, to try who could reach the highest side of a wall. De Grammont offered to join in the contest, and, in the true spirit of a courtier, knowing how jealous the Cardinal was of his powers, he allowed his efforts to surpass his own.\*

So, too, it must be remembered that many of our great men have not thought it below their dignity to while away their leisure hours in some trifling game, glad to throw aside, and forget, the trammels of life; although it has been asserted that a disinclination to athletic sports, and exercises, will be in general found among the peculiarities which mark a youth of genius. In support of this common notion, D'Israeli quotes Beattie, who thus describes his ideal minstrel —

Concourse and noise and toil he ever fled,  
Nor cared to mingle in the clamorous fray  
Of squabbling imps, but to the forest sped.

But experience only too frequently shows the contrary to be the case. Thus the Duke of

\* See D'Israeli's "Curiosities of Literature."



Wellington, although upon points of military discipline he was firm and strict, yet, the instant the duties were performed, he entered fully and freely, with his personal staff, into all their amusements, promoting, as far as lay in his power, any manly sport. Although, too, cut off from indulging much in pastimes with his sons, he was glad of doing so whenever he had an opportunity. The Rev. William Wagner, then Vicar of Brighton, who was tutor to his sons, has given an interesting anecdote of the Duke's love of tennis, which we subjoin :—"When at Strathfieldsaye, the Duke played tennis in the tennis court, which was a riding school in Lord Rivers' time, and which the Duke had converted to its present use. His Grace and I were, perhaps, more equally matched than men usually are, and hence the Duke often sent to ask me whether I was disposed to play at tennis with him. On one occasion I made a chance back-handed violent return of the ball, which was so rapid and twisting that he could not get out of its way. It struck him on the side. He rubbed the place, and referred to a custom in India of rubbing for a variety of ills. He then resumed the game, and would not leave off till he had played out the set."

Another tennis player was Charles James Fox, a pastime into which he entered with



all earnestness, in his spare moments. He would have been famous also as a batsman, if he had applied himself to cricket with the same seriousness. Anyhow, he was a capital cricketer. "My love to Carlisle," he wrote to Selwyn from King's Gate in August, 1771, "and tell him we have a cricket party here, at which I am very near the best player, so he may judge of the rest." When past five-and-fifty, and as much older than his years in body, as he was younger in all else, he never failed to run himself out, amidst the reproachful cries of spectators, to whom it seemed almost a miracle that he could run at all. Trap-ball he played in his chair, adds Trevelyan,\* to the very last, "and so skilfully as to deprive him of all excuse for the barefaced advantages which he took over the very small Whigs, in whose company he was as much at home as ever he had been with their grandfathers."

A game of fives was an intense amusement to William Hazlitt, who was an enthusiastic admirer of the game. At one period of his life he was a regular attendant at the fives-court, St. Martin's Street, and in one of his essays he alludes to the death of John Cavanagh, the celebrated fives player, in the year 1819, at his house in Burbage Street, St. Giles's. Describing, too, this pastime,

\* "Early History of C. J. Fox," 1881, 457.



he says that "it is a game which no one thinks of playing without putting on a flannel jacket, and after you have been engaged in it for ten minutes, you are just as if you had been dipped in a mill-pond. John Davies, the finest player in the world, never pulled off his coat, and merely buttoning it, that it might not be in his way, would go down into the fives-court and play two of the best players of the day, and at the end of the match you could not perceive that a hair of his head was wet. Powell, the keeper of the court, said that he never seemed to follow the ball, but that it came to him ; he did everything with such ease."

The fourth Earl of Carlisle learned cricket at Eton, and in a letter to George Selwyn, boasts that even at Mannheim, he was, with the dawn, practising with the bat, and Walpole, alluding to his career at the same school, about the year 1726, says :—"An expedition against bargemen, and a game of cricket are very pretty things, but, thank my stars, I can remember things that are very nearly as pretty."

At the commencement of the present century, indeed, many of the nobility and celebrities of the day not only patronized, but heartily enjoyed a game of cricket, and amongst their numbers we find the Dukes of York, Richmond, Bedford, and Hamilton, the Earls of Thanet and



Darnley ; even, too, the Prince Regent, on several occasions, played in the White Conduit Fields. Lord Byron, in the year 1805, played in the Harrow eleven against Eton, and the excellent, and philanthropic William Wilberforce was laid up by the severe blow which he received on the leg, whilst playing at the game with his sons. And yet in the last century, cricket would seem to have been placed in the category of vulgar games, and in *The Connoisseur*, dated 1756, the vulgarities of a young man of the period are thus enumerated :—Drinking purl in the morning, smoking his pipe in a night-cellar, eating black puddings at Bartholomew Fair, boxing with Buckhorse, his greatest excellence being cricket-playing, in which he is esteemed as good a bat as either of the Bennets ; and is styled by his brethren of the wicket “Long Robin.”

Although, happily, times have long since changed, yet even at this period Horace Walpole tells us that the clergy, disregarding the prejudice of the day, were the great players, and adds :—“I could tell you of Lord Montford’s making cricket matches, and fetching up parsons, by express, from different parts of England to play on Richmond Green.”

With cricketers of the early part of the present



century, the name of William Ward was well-known—once Bank Director and Member of Parliament. But how soon popularity subsides was forcibly illustrated at Lord's in the year 1859. When some exciting match was being played, one of Mr. Ward's friends was heard to remark, "Poor Ward is now about his last, dying of a diseased kidney—very painful." Two or three distinguished young players of the day remarked, "Ward? Who's Ward?"

Then there was Lord Frederick Beauclerk, who was another distinguished cricketer, having been a frequent attendant at Lord's, either as a player, or looker on, for nearly sixty years. So truly fond was he of the game, that in his declining years "he appeared at Lord's only in his brougham, and always, as it seemed, with a lady-nurse at his side, looking a striking illustration of the strong man becoming weakness at the last." Lord William Lennox writes\* that, in his Westminster School days, he was playing with his brother in a match in Goodwood Park—the parish of Boxgrove against that of Berstead—when Lord Frederick Beauclerk and others joined the cricketers. On learning that the match was just over, Lord Frederick said, "I suppose you Westminster fellows are in pretty good form?" Of course

\* "Celebrities I have Known," 1877, ii., 307-8.



the answer was "Yes." "Look here," he added, "I'll put you to the test; you shall each have two overs" (at that period six was the number, instead of four, as at present) "and if you get me out I'll tip you a guinea."

The agreement made, he doffed his coat, borrowed a bat, and was quickly at his wicket. But "my brother and myself soon found that we might as well have endeavoured to bowl down the monument as Lord Frederick's wicket, and were in despair that we should never see the golden reward, when, fortunately, at the last ball but one, he was caught out, bowled by myself." "Well bowled! well caught!" he exclaimed, "there's a guinea apiece for you; you have earned it fairly."

Lord Winchester was another good cricketer, and a most liberal supporter of the game. In 1797 he attempted to introduce a fourth stump, that "the game might be thus rendered shorter by easier bowling," but nothing came of his proposed innovation. A notable man in the cricket field was Sir Horace Mann, who was known as the king of cricket. He was the principal maker of the different matches, and kept open house for the members of the club at his seat near Maidstone. "His rival in making matches at cricket," writes Lord William Lennox, "was Richard



Leigh, of Wilmington, who substantiated his claim by my grandmother, the Duchess of Gordon, publicly saying, 'Mr. Leigh, though I am the first, you are the second *match-maker* in England.'"

Lord Lyttelton, with his two brothers, and eight sons, it may be remembered, played a famous match at Hagley against King Edward's School, Bromsgrove, in August, 1867, and won by ten wickets, Lord Lyttelton celebrating his victory in a humorous set of verses —

Sing the song of Hagley cricket,  
When the peer and all his clan  
Grasped the bat to guard the wicket  
As no other household can.\*

Littlehampton was a favourite resort of Lord Westbury in his early life, where, as his practice grew larger, he took a house. "The simplicity and freedom of the place," writes Mr. Nash,† "attracted him. The pebble beach and sands, which at low water stretch for miles along the coast, gave an equal delight to the hardworked lawyer and his children. He was always ready to take part in their games of cricket or rounders on the green facing the sea, or to bring his mind to bear on the difficulties of flying a kite, these

\* See "Notes and Queries," 5th S., ix., 311-12.

† "Life of Lord Westbury," i., 62.



intervals of relaxation being like a late boyhood to him."

The late Bishop of Sodor and Man was a cricketer, and, on one occasion after a confirmation, he engaged in a game with the school boys, joining them at the wickets with these words:—"I'll make the best long-stop among you, for I have got my apron." Alluding afterwards to this event, he said, "That impression never passed away from the minds of these boys. They felt that they had amongst them a man, speaking on the highest and holiest subjects—leading them up to all that confirmation was intended to lead them to—but still remembering that their bodies required healthful recreation."

This was conduct on the bishop's part well worthy of imitation, and it was this reflection which caused him to go out for the rest of the afternoon, and to play cricket "with the boys on whose heads he had solemnly placed his hands in confirmation. From that time the bishop was never named in the parish without some profitable thoughts arising in the minds of the young people."\*

Samuel Morley, although in his letters to his sons† he makes continual reference to their sports,

\* Smiles, "Life and Labour," 312.

† Life, by E. Hodder, 175.



very rarely took any part in them. In one of his early letters, his son Howard says, with just a tinge of melancholy, "My dearest father, I would just add that I should so like for you to take an interest in the noble game of cricket!"

But it was not in the nature of Mr. Morley to take an interest in any game, however "noble." He never had any amusement as a "hobby" in the whole course of his life; there was no gun, rod, bat, or boat that he looked upon with affection. He did not excel, because he never attempted to excel, in sports of any kind, if driving be excepted.

Numerous as have been the cricketers among the great men of the past, there is little doubt that the same will be the case in years to come; for, perhaps, there is no other game which has created for itself such intense devotion and attachment.

George Edward Street was fond of a cricket match, and from his first year in London till his dying day, he was always in the habit of snatching an hour at Lord's, three or four times in the season, if he could contrive.

Another recreation which in bygone years was much in favour, is the now neglected game of bowls. Rogers, in his "Recollections," tells of Lord Chatham and Lord Temple, while on a visit to Lord Grenville, in the year 1767, at Wotton,



Bucks, playing for an hour and a half after dinner, while "the ladies sat by looking on and drinking their coffee, and, in our walk home, we stopped to regale ourselves with a syllabub under the cow." We are further told, too, how, when bowling was high in repute, "some Dukes at Mary'bone bowled time away," while the Duchess of Devonshire of that day often watched the play of her guests at the game, till nine o'clock in the evening. Evelyn frequently alludes to the game, and on one occasion tells us how about "four in the afternoon, being at bowls on the green, he discerned a vessel, which proved to be that in which my wife was, and which got into the harbour about eight that evening, to my no small joy." In another entry he says "he went to Durdans" (now Lord Rosebery's seat at Epsom) "to a challenged match at bowls for ten pounds, which he won." The great John Locke, writing in the year 1679, tells us that "the sports of England for a curious stranger to see are horse-racing, hawking, hunting, and bowling. At Marebone and Putney we may see several persons of quality bowling two or three times a week." Allusions to the game are numerous, from which we gather how "persons of quality" spent many an hour in casting their bowls on the open greens.



A game of bowls, and a quiet little dinner, were the inducements which Douglas Jerrold would occasionally propose to his friend Charles Dickens to pay him a visit, which was always of the most delightful and hospitable kind. In his "Life and Remains," published by his son, is quoted one of such invitations :—

"MY DEAR DICKENS,

" . . . When, *when* we can count upon a dry afternoon, won't you, and the Hidalgo, and Mac——, and the ladies come down here to a cut of country lamb, and a game at bowls ? Our turf is coming up so velvety. I intend to have a waist-coat sliced from it, trimmed with daisies.

" We must have another quiet day here between the 17th and play. I find, on return, the garden out very nice indeed, and I wish you could only see (and eat) the dish of strawberries just brought in for breakfast by my girl Polly—'all,' as she says, 'big and square as pincushions.' "

On these occasions the fun was diversified, and now and then one might see grave editors and contributors "basting the bear" with knotted pocket-handkerchiefs to their hearts' content. But when winter precluded his joining in an open-air game, he often enjoyed a game at whist or draughts, and created no small merriment



by telling some curious story, or ludicrous *contre-temps*, which was as great a pleasure for him to relate, as for others to hear.

In spite of his blindness, John Metcalf was a very successful player of bowls, receiving the odds of a bowl extra for the deficiency of each eye. He had thus three bowls for the other's one; and, when playing, stationed one friend at the jack, and another midway, who keeping up a constant conversation with him, enabled him readily to judge of the distance. In athletic sports, such as wrestling and boxing, adds Mr. Smiles,\* he was also a great adept, and being about six feet two in height, "few durst try upon him the practical jokes which cowardly persons are sometimes disposed to play upon the blind."

Wedgwood, who had a kindly interest for his neighbours of every rank, in June, 1787, opened a bowling-green for their use, dividing his patronage among those who were in trade.

Laying aside his philosophic studies, John Dalton often frequented the bowling-green near Manchester. One day when an eminent professor of chemistry called at his house and found him out, he was directed to look for him at a neighbouring bowling-green. As an excuse for being absent from his laboratory, Dalton pleaded that he

\* "Lives of the Engineers," i., 212.



liked to take a Saturday in the week. Considering Dalton's activity of mind, and persevering industry, a game of bowls on a Thursday afternoon was a well-earned amusement.

But, if bowls has been stigmatized by some, as a childish game, what shall be said of skittles, in which Wilson the artist and Goldsmith were wont to indulge? Cooke, the young law-student, and also his near neighbour in the Temple, tells us that a shoemakers' holiday was a day of great festivity to poor Goldsmith, and was spent in the following innocent manner: "Three or four of his intimate friends rendezvoused at his chambers to breakfast about ten o'clock in the morning; at eleven they proceeded by the City Road and through the fields to Highbury Barn to dinner; about six o'clock in the evening they adjourned to White Conduit House to drink tea, and concluded by supping at the Grecian or Temple-exchange Coffee-houses, or at the Globe in Fleet Street. The whole expenses of this day's *fête* never exceeded a crown, and oftener were from three and sixpence to four shillings; for which the party obtained good air and exercise, good living, the example of simple manners, and good conversation."

At such times skittles was an attraction; but remembering, writes Mr. Forster, what Horace



Walpole tells us of the Chatsworth of his day, that the old duchess "staid every evening till it was dark in the skittle-ground, keeping the score," we need not be shocked at the tastes of Goldsmith. So long, however, as the recreation sought, brings relief to the mind, allowance must be made even if at times it be somewhat eccentric. Thus Dr. Samuel Clarke\* found occasional amusement in leaping over chairs and tables, or, as Thomas Bott expressed it, "swimming on a table," and one day, when so employed, he was heard to say on the approach of a solemn pedantic acquaintance, "Boys, be wise, here comes a fool."

Cardinal Mazarin had a similar weakness, and was fond of shutting himself up in a room, and jumping over the chairs, arranged in positions varying according to the degrees of difficulty in clearing them. On one occasion, the story runs, that when so employed, he forgot to lock the door, and a young courtier, inadvertently entering, surprised the great man in his undignified pursuit. It was a somewhat embarrassing position, but the young man was equal to the emergency, for, assuming the greatest interest in the proceedings, he exclaimed with well-feigned earnestness, "I will bet your Eminence two gold pieces I can beat that jump." He was wise enough to

\* "Life of Oliver Goldsmith," ii., 143.



lose his two gold pieces, but, before long, he gained a mitre. Dean Swift, again, relieved his tense and tragic moods by harnessing his servants with cords—on one occasion he insisted on harnessing his learned friend Dr. Sheridan—and driving them up and down the stairs, and through the rooms of his deanery.\*

Equally innocent was the philosopher Dugald Stewart's attempt to balance a peacock's feather on his nose. On one occasion, when a friend visited Woodhouselee, Stewart was found amusing himself with this exercise, while Patrick Fraser Tytler, the historian, was his competitor in this curious contest of skill.

In 1867 Lord Eldon purchased his seat of Encombe, in Dorsetshire, one of its strongest recommendations being, that its distance from London was so great, that he stood little chance of having his rural enjoyments interrupted by being summoned thence to consult on trivial occasions. Not long after he had become possessed of this property, he might have been seen jumping up in the drawing-room, and dancing a step to a tune of his own singing, and then observing with a smile to the family party around, "You don't know the luxury of playing the fool."

\* "Temple Bar," Vol. lxiii., pp., 355-56.



On one occasion, when going to call on a friend, he saw, on passing through the grounds, two daughters of his friend, and two other girls playing at see-saw—two at each end of an oak tree, which had been cut down. He used afterwards to compliment one of the young ladies on the pretty ankle, which he persisted had been revealed.

Faraday thoroughly enjoyed his leisure hours. His brother-in-law, the artist, who in his early life was much with him, writes :—“ All the years I was with Harding, I dined at the Royal Institution. After dinner we nearly always had our games just like boys—sometimes at ball, or with horse-chestnuts instead of marbles—Faraday appearing to enjoy them as much as I did, and generally excelling us all. Sometimes we rode round the theatre on a velocipede, which was then a new thing.” Indeed, tradition affirms that in the earliest part of a summer morning Faraday has been seen going up Hampstead Hill on his velocipede.\*

Furthur particulars about his love of amusement are given by his niece, Miss Reid, who tells us :—“ When my uncle left his study and came into the sitting-room he would enter into all the nonsense that was going on as heartily as anyone, and as we sat round the fire, he would often play

† “ Life of Faraday,” Bence Jones, i., 419.



some childish game, at which he was usually the best performer, or he would take part in a charade, and I well recollect his being dressed up to act the villain, and very fierce he looked. Another time I recollect him as the learned pig."

William Pitt delighted in a game with children. The late Sir William Napier, when a boy, enjoyed a game of romps with Pitt, at the house of Lady Hester Stanhope. A visit of this kind, which took place two years before the statesman's death, he has thus described:—"Pitt liked practical fun, and used to riot in it with Lady Hester, Charles and James Stanhope, and myself. One instance is worth noting. We were resolved to blacken his face with burnt cork, which he most strenuously resisted; but, at the beginning of the fray, a servant announced that Lords Castlereagh and Liverpool desired to see him on business. 'Let them wait in the other room,' was the answer, and the great Minister instantly turned to the battle, catching up a cushion and belabouring us with it in glorious fun. We were, however, too many and strong for him, and, after at least a ten minutes' fight, got him down, and were actually daubing his face, when, with a look of pretended confidence in his prowess, he said: 'Stop; this will do. I could easily beat you all, but we must not keep these grandees waiting any longer.'



His defeat was, however, palpable, and we were obliged to get a towel and basin of water to wash him clean, before he could receive the grandees. Being thus put in order, the basin was hid behind the sofa, and the two lords were ushered in."

Canning played blindman's-buff with the Princess Caroline while at Montagu House, which was one of Napoleon's favourite games.

None of Norman Macleod's boys showed more excitement than he when they were out fishing on the loch and when there happened to be a good "take." On the croquet green, competing with his children, he was the keenest of the party; taking an interest in all such games.

Then, again, the fascination of golf has enlisted into its ranks men of all classes—Sir Henry Raeburn having been a capital player. One of the earliest notices of this game is given by Thomas Shadwell, who evidently was fond of this, and other pastimes :—

Thus all our life long we are frolick and gay,  
And instead of Court-revels we merrily play  
At trap, at rules, and at barley-break run,  
At golf, and at football, and when we have done  
These innocent sports, we'll laugh and lie down,  
And to each pretty lass  
We will give a green gown.

When the Duke of York resided at Holyrood, in the year 1679, he joined heartily in the pastimes



of the time, and Mr. William Tytler tells us that he was frequently seen "in a party at golf on the Links of Leith, with some of the nobility and gentry." He further adds that when a youth he remembers "having conversed with an old man, named Andrew Dickson, a golf club maker, who said that as a boy he used to carry the Duke's golf clubs, and to run before him and announce where the balls fell." So fond of golf, also, was the great Montrose, that hardly had the minstrels ceased to serenade the boy-husband, and his bride, "Sweet Mistress Magdalene Carnegie," than we find him busily employed with clubs and balls. That fifty years later it continued to be the favourite amusement of the aristocracy of the Scotch capital, may be gathered from the books of expenditure of Sir John Foulis, of Ravelstoun, who appears to have spent the greater part of his leisure hours in "losing at golfe," with many of the highest quality of the time. Among further interesting anecdotes given by Mr. MacGregor in his little work on "Pastimes and Players," we are told how Alexander Elphinston and Captain Porteous played, in the year 1724, "a solemn match at golf" for twenty guineas on Leith Links. But eight years afterwards, on the very ground where he had won this match, Elphinston shot his man dead in a duel, while the other



player in the match was the victim in the famous "Porteous mob." On the same Leith Links, Lord President Duncan Forbes, of Culloden, might be seen, and so keen a golf player was he, that when they were covered with snow he played on the sands by the sea shore.

But, just as golf has been a source of pleasure to many, the same is equally true of archery. It was in the year 1777, that Mr. Waring, "the father of modern archery," as he is generally styled, was recommended to try the bow as a means of expanding a contracted chest. Sir Ashton Lever invited him to pitch his target in the gardens of Leicester House. In a very little time, Mr. Waring's example was followed by others—Sir Ashton Lever himself among the number—and, in the year 1780, a Toxophilite Society was formed. It may be remembered how George the Fourth, then Prince of Wales, lent his patronage to the movement, and there is a well-known picture of his Royal Highness in the costume of Captain-General of the Royal Kent Archers, a society which sprang up into existence a little afterwards. When Clerkenwell Church was being rebuilt (1791) contemporary archers manifested their respect for Sir William Wood, an old Marshal of the Finsbury Archers, by expending a considerable sum in the re-embellishment and removal of his monument



from the outside of the old, to the interior of the new building, and the epitaph still survives to tell us —

Sir William Wood lies very near this stone,  
In 's time, in archery excelled by none.  
Few were his equals, and his noble art  
Has suffered now in its most tender part;  
Long did he live the honour of the bow,  
And his great age to that alone did owe.

Among the many old archery societies with which the names of some of our eminent men have been associated, may be noticed that popularly known as the “Woodmen of Arden,” the rules of which were suspended in favour of Sir Robert Peel, on the occasion of the Jubilee festival in 1835. The shooting grounds are in the Forest of Arden, the silver bugle-horn having been presented in the year 1787, by the Earl of Aylesford. Another famous society was the Irvine, formed in the year 1814. Its members took part in the Eglinton Tournament, clad in Lincoln green and buff, and wearing buckskin boots. They were commanded by Captain Grahame; and the Earl of Eglinton, afterwards Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, was so impressed with the event, that he offered for annual competition, a gorgeous gold belt and quiver, set with large and costly carbuncles, and known as the “Eglinton Tournament Belt.”

An accomplished archer was Richard Owen Cam-



bridge, whose charming villa at Twickenham was known as the hospitable rendezvous of the scholar, the statesman, the philosopher, and the wit. Boswell, for instance, has given us an account of an interesting party which assembled here in 1775, at which were present Boswell himself, Dr. Johnson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Gibbon, the historian. Although he cared little or nothing for the sports of the field, he nevertheless arrived at such expertness in the use of the bow and arrow, that we are told "the head of a duck swimming in the river was a favourite mark which he seldom missed." His fondness for this pastime partly originated in his having, at one time, made the history of archery his study, and, partly, by his having amused himself with forming a collection of ancient and modern weapons connected with the art, which collection he subsequently presented to Sir Ashton Lever's museum.

Sir Henry Raeburn was another good archer, while some of our noted men, such as John Leech, and Vice-Chancellor Shadwell, exercised themselves by athletic sports.

The late Bishop Wordsworth always referred with pride to his athletic attainments in early life. Indeed, he was the first in all those athletic exercises which are prized, and honoured by school-boys, no less than proficiency in intellectual ac-



quirements. He was the best cricketer, the best football player, the best fives player with both the hand and bat, and the best runner in Winchester School. In the cricket match between Winchester and Harrow, of the year 1825, Wordsworth caught out Henry Manning, and always spoke with glee of the feat. The two men, in spite of religious differences, remained firm friends throughout life. Then, again, Lord Lawrence, during his home life in England, spent his summer evenings at Southgate House in croquet, cutting himself adrift altogether from London gaieties.

From a charming sketch of Lord Lyndhurst as he was in his home\*—in a letter to Sir Edmund Beckett by Miss Stewart, who lived as governess and companion to his daughters for many years—it appears “there was a very deep and strong attachment between him and his aged unmarried sister, who lived in his family. This affection was the greatest treasure of her quiet, unselfish existence. He played backgammon with her almost every evening before joining in any other game or in conversation with those present. It was fun to watch the barefaced manner in which he cheated her, and the many side-glances that revealed his treachery to lookers-on. At last she would find

\* “Life of Lord Lyndhurst,” by Sir Theodore Martin, 1883, 509.



him out, and loud and long was the burst of laughter, sweet music to the dear old lady."

Charles Darwin enjoyed his game of backgammon, when the work of the day was over, and he could join his family circle; while David Hume would occasionally rest his brain by a game of bagatelle.

Of sedentary or arm-chair amusements, a prominent place must be given to chess, despite the fact that Lord Bacon censured it as "too wise a game," and that Sir Walter Scott withdrew from it, alleging that "he saw a man might learn another language with less strain to the mind." But complaints of this kind are certainly the exception, considering by what a variety of remarkable personages it has been patronized. Thus, Charles XII. of Sweden was passionately attached to it; and who can forget the amusement which it afforded to Napoleon during his monotonous captivity at St. Helena? Indeed, it is affirmed that Charles I. was actually playing when he received the tidings that the Scots intended to deliver him up; and Frederick the Great, Elector of Saxony, returned calmly to his game after yet bitterer news. In truth, a game with so many historical associations may justly override adverse criticism; for its characteristic power of engrossing the mind, and withdrawing it, perhaps, from sub-



jects of painful contemplation, is a feature to be commended, rather than blamed. In short, the weight of authority is strongly in favour of chess, whatever Cowper may say to the contrary —

Who, then, that has a mind well strung and tuned  
To contemplation, and within his reach  
A scene so friendly to his favourite task,  
Would waste attention at the chequered board,  
His host of wooden warriors to and fro,  
Marching and countermarching, with an eye  
As fixed as marble, with a forehead ridged  
And furrowed into storms, and with a hand  
Trembling, as if Eternity were hung  
In balance on his conduct of a pin ?

It has been suggested—and rightly so—that had Cowper given to the close, and methodical calculations of chess, some of those hours which he passed in gazing dreamily on the drawing fire, he might have been far less subject to morbid thoughts and fancies. On the other hand, among the eminent men who made chess a favourite recreation, was Samuel Warren, who, in his “Introduction to the Study of the Law,” has strongly recommended it as a most desirable recreation for those training for legal honours.

In his early life Sydney Smith was fond of chess, but left it off for many years. One winter evening, however, he took it into his head to resume it, and selected as his antagonist his daughter. “His mode of play,” she writes, “was very character-



istic—bold, rapid attack, without a moment's pause or indecision, which would probably have exposed him to danger from a more experienced adversary ; but as it was, with a profound contempt for my skill, promising me a shilling if I beat him, he sat down with a book in his hand, looked up for an instant, made a move, and beat me regularly all through the winter. At last I won my shilling, but lost my playfellow ; he challenged me no more."

Many of Richard Penn's remarks in his little work on chess-playing, are as sensible as they are quaint. "Some persons," he says, "when they are playing with a stranger who entreats to be allowed to take back a move, let him do so the first time ; then, almost immediately after, put their own Queen *en prise* ; and when a mistake is politely pointed out to them, they say that they never take back a move, but that they are ready to begin another game."\* It should be noted that some of the wood-cuts in this amusing volume are from sketches by his friend Sir F. Chantrey. In several of these, both Sir Francis, and Mr. Penn are felicitously hit off as anglers ; but one of the best, exhibits them at chess—the great sculptor seeking consolation under gout, as is witnessed by his flannelled limb and footstool.

\* "Maxims and Hints for the Angler and Chess-Player," 1842.



A favourite relaxation with Thomas Henry Buckle was chess, a game in which he displayed very considerable skill. Captain Kennedy, one of his friends most capable of giving an account of his play, says\* :—"Nature had gifted him with a superlative aptitude for the game of chess, and he brought the powers of a rare intellect—clear, penetrating, and sagacious beyond that of most men—to bear upon it. His imagination was that of the poet, 'all compact,' but subservient to the dictates of a logical judgment. His combinations accordingly, under such guidance, seldom, if ever, exhibited a flaw, and were characterized by exactitude of calculation, and brilliant device. He excelled in pawn play, which he conducted with an ingenuity, and deadly accuracy worthy of the renowned pawn general, Szen. He gave large odds, such as Rook and Knight, with wonderful skill and success, appearing to have a sort of intuitive knowledge of a strange opponent's chess idiosyncrasy, which enabled him precisely to gauge the kind of risks he might venture to run. The rendering of heavy odds, as every experienced chess-player knows, necessitates hazardous and unsound play on the part of the giver.

These contests of his at odds were always full of interest and entertainment to lookers-on, and a

\* "Life of Thomas Henry Buckle," A. H. Huth, i., 24-25.



gallery, two or three deep, often surrounded his board in the Strand Divan, where it was his 'custom in the afternoon' to recreate himself with his favourite game. I have occasionally seen roars of laughter elicited from the spectators by the crestfallen aspect of some poor, discomfited Rook-player, who, with much care and solicitude, having obtained, as he fondly believed, an impregnable position, had suddenly found his defences scattered like chaff, and himself accommodated with a mate, after the sacrifice, by his keen-witted opponent, of two or three pieces in succession. Whether winning or losing, Mr. Buckle was a pleasant adversary, and sat quietly before the board, smoking his cigar, and pursuing his game with inflexible steadiness."

But it would seem that Buckle prudently guarded against the risk of losing his temper, for, "on one occasion when he was asked the ground for his refusal to play with an extremely slow player, whose tediousness had obtained him the cognomen of 'the Telegraph,' in his own sententious manner, he gave utterance to the following reply: 'Well, sir, the slowness of genius is difficult to bear, but the slowness of mediocrity is intolerable.'"

Many interesting anecdotes are given by Mr. Huth of Buckle's chess-playing. Thus, one day,



at Dresden, after watching some players at a *café*, he was invited by one of them to play. The man played carelessly at first, but soon paid more and more attention to the game; and, on being beaten, he got up and made a profound bow, remarking, "Whoever you are, you should only play with our best players."

Buckle soon won a reputation on the Continent. On another occasion he was watching a game outside a *café* at Rome, as was his wont, when, on the conclusion of the game, one of the players asked him to play. Seeing that he was an Englishman, and very young, the man proposed a scudo as the stake. Buckle assented.

"Or, perhaps, a couple of scudi?" he added.

Buckle agreed.

"Well, perhaps it would make a better game if we were to play for five scudi?"

Upon this Buckle began to get angry, and said —

"I'll play you for a hundred scudi if you like."

The man was quite taken aback, and asked him his name.

"Buckle."

"How do you spell it?"

He was told.

"Ah, Booclay!" he said; "then I won't play with you."



When staying at Paris, Buckle played Kieseritzki at the Café de la Régence, and even the redoubted St. Amant himself. Each of these masters gave him a pawn ; but each was beaten. Later, when he visited Paris in the year 1848, he again engaged Kieseritzki equal ; and, taking these games with former ones, beat him.

Once more, it was in Paris, while watching a game of draughts outside a *café*, he told the players who had just drawn it that it might be won by white in three moves. They, who knew nothing of him, would not believe him ; upon which Buckle made a bet, and won it.

A story is told of the Earl of Sunderland, minister to George I., who was a most inveterate chess-player, that he once played with the Laird of Cluny and with Cunningham, the translator of Horace. Cunningham, it appears, with much honesty and little knowledge of the world, vanquished the statesman, who was so piqued at his conqueror's superiority that he dismissed him without any reward. Cluny, on the other hand, who allowed himself occasionally to be beaten, obtained all the favours he wanted.

An interesting historical little episode, in which chess played an important part, may be mentioned in connection with Lord Howe. It appears that a game of chess, with his accomplished sister Mrs.



Howe, was the ostensible cause of Benjamin Franklin's frequent visits to that lady's residence in Grafton Street; while to confer in private with Lord Howe on American affairs, was the real and important motive.

"What," inquired Mrs. Howe of Franklin, over their chess-board, "were the real and substantial grounds of quarrel between Great Britain and America?"

"There was no clashing interests," replied the other, "it was rather a matter of punctilio, which two or three sensible people might settle in half-an-hour."\*

But this well-intentioned plan unfortunately ended in failure, to Franklin's sorrow and Lord Howe's disappointment. At the same time, the kindly feeling and thoughtful consideration which prompted the meeting has left its record behind it.

Frederic Denison Maurice was a good chess-man, and played an excellent, but not a highly scientific game. He seldom, however, found time for amusing himself in this way, unless it was for the sake of giving pleasure to someone else. In chess, too, Archbishop Whately would sometimes seek a pleasant diversion after the business of the day was over, occasionally varying it with a game of backgammon, into the spirit of

\* "Franklin's Life and Writings," i., 141.



which he entered with thorough earnestness. In the same way, Douglas Jerrold, when tired of reading and letter-writing, would join the family circle for half-an-hour before going to bed, and joke over the supper table, either listening to stories about the dog or parrot, or taking part in a game of whist or draughts.

But some of our eminent men, preferring amusement combined with activity, have selected billiards for their indoor recreation, as was the case with Lord Palmerston, whose best strokes were invariably the winning hazards. Sir Charles James Napier found billiards a great attraction, but his steady resistance to the licentious manners of his time caused him to abandon the game. "There is a billiard-table," he wrote from Blatchington in 1801, "but, feeling a growing fondness for it, and fearing to be drawn into play for money, I have not touched a cue lately." The famous Marquis of Queensberry was skilful at billiards. Writing from Paris in the year 1763, to George Selwyn, he says—"I won the first day about £2,000, of which I brought off about £1,500. All things are exaggerated; I am supposed to have won at least twice as much." In 1765 he is reported to have won two thousand louis of a German at billiards. In a letter to Selwyn, Gilly Williams says of him—"I did not know he was more of an adept at



that game than you are at any other, but I think you are both said to be losers on the whole; at least Betty says that her letters mention you as pillaged."

Henry Fawcett in early life was an expert billiard player, and one of the earliest anecdotes, of his Cambridge career, illustrates not only his proficiency in the game, but the impression which he made for coolness and self-command. It seems that there was at Peterhouse a youth nicknamed the "Captain," apparently on account of his sporting tendencies. This Captain, confident in his own power, challenged Fawcett to play a game of billiards. They accordingly played a single game of 100. After a time the Captain had scored ninety-six to Fawcett's seventy-five. Fawcett was to play, and the spectators taunted him with offers of ten to one on his opponent. Fawcett accepted all bets offered at this, and then at lower rates. At length he played, and, much to the surprise and astonishment of those present, made the necessary twenty-five in a single break. "The bets," he said, "were forced on me, but the odds were really more than ten to one against my making twenty-five in any position of the balls, though I saw a stroke which I knew that I could make, and which would leave me with a fine game." But he gave up billiards, and discouraged his



College acquaintance in the foolish practice of playing for more than they could afford.

Attwood, the English musician, informs us that when placed under Mozart he frequently played a game with him, his teacher being far more ready to indulge in this pastime than to give him a lesson. But few games have possessed a greater fascination for great men than billiards, and it may be remembered how Louis XIV. amused himself in this manner, particularly in the winter evenings, when he played with M. le Vendôme or M. le Grand, sometimes with Le Maréchal de Villeroy, and occasionally with the Duc de Grammont. It appears, too, that the King heard so many reports of Chamillart's skill in playing, that he requested M. le Grand to bring him one evening, and, to his success as a player, his good fortune in the state has been attributed.

In the early years of George III.'s reign London possessed only two well-known houses for billiards—one in Pall Mall, the other at the corner of the Piazza, Russell Street, Covent Garden. The latter rooms were kept by the celebrated player, Abraham Carter, whose chief competitor was the famous amateur Andrews. This individual habitually breakfasted, dined, and supped, upon tea and buttered toast, in order that "he might have the greatest possible supply



of nervous energy for the beloved game in which he won infinite honour." Another eminent billiard-player of the same period was Mr. Dew, whose instructions for the game have been incorporated in Hoyle's Games.

An amusing anecdote is told of Lord Chesterfield. When staying at Bath he amused himself sometimes at billiards with a well-known gamester of the name of Lookup. On one occasion, by an artful *ruse*, Lookup, after winning a game or two, asked his lordship how many he would give, if he were to put a patch over one eye. His lordship agreed to give him five, and Lookup having won several games in succession, Lord Chesterfield threw down his mace, declaring that he considered his antagonist played as well with one eye as with two. "I don't wonder at it, my lord," replied Lookup, "for I have only seen out of one these ten years." It is not surprising that Lord Chesterfield was deceived for the eye of which Lookup had lost the use appeared as perfect as the other, even to a near observer.

It was great sport, we are told, to watch George Payne and old Admiral Rous at billiards, and to listen to their comments on each other's play. Indeed, tidings that the Admiral and George Payne were playing together would any night send the Turf Club men flocking upstairs.



## CHAPTER II.

### RECREATIONS.

William Pitt—Prior—Thomas Warton—Porson—Elmsley—  
Turner—Bishop Corbet—George Selwyn—Charles  
Mathews—Dr. Paley—Lord Macaulay—Charles Lamb  
—Douglas Jerrold—Curran—Dr. Battie—Lord Stowell  
—Shelley—Robert Stephenson—Edmund Kean—Lord  
Westbury—Vice-Chancellor Shadwell—Lord Byron—  
T. Assheton Smith—Lord Hatherley—Sydney Smith—  
Warren Hastings—Sir Thomas Munro—David Garrick  
—Charles Lever—Third Earl Spencer—Charles James  
Fox—Gibbon—Goldsmith—Faraday—Sir Charles Barry  
—James Brindley.

It is curious to note how many men have in their leisure moments found a strange pleasure in recreation of an almost eccentric kind. Thus it has been remarked that the contrast between a great man, as he appears to the world, and as he is seen in private life, was never more strikingly illustrated than in the case of the younger Pitt. “When he was at Walmer,” writes Lady Hester Stanhope, “he used to go to a farm where hay and corn were kept for the horses. He had a room



fitted up there with a table and two or three chairs. Oh, what slices of bread-and-butter I have seen him eat there, and hunches of bread-and-cheese big enough for a ploughman! He used to say that whenever he could retire from public life he would have a good English woman cook. To see him at table with vulgar sea captains, and ignorant militia colonels, with two or three servants in attendance—he who had been accustomed to a servant behind each chair, to all that was great and distinguished in Europe—one might have supposed that disgust would have worked some change in him; but it was always the same. On one occasion Sir Edward Knatchbull took him to the Ashford ball, to show him off to the yeomen, and their wives. Though sitting in the room, in all his senatorial seriousness, he observed everything, and nobody could give a more lively account of the ball than he. He told who was fond of a certain captain, how Mr. R. was dressed, how Miss Jones, Miss Johnson, or Miss Anybody danced.”

In the same way, many men who have been famous for their polish and culture have in their play-hours experienced a fascinating amusement in associating with their inferiors. Prior, for instance, “one of the most elegant of our minor poets, the companion of princes and diplomatists,



constantly passed whole evenings in chatting with a common soldier and his slattern wife in a low public-house in Long Acre.

“Thomas Warton, the historian of English poetry, and a singularly refined scholar, was often to be found in sordid taverns joking and being joked. Porson and Elmsley had similar propensities. So also had Turner, the painter.”\* It is also recorded how Bishop Corbet passed his lighter hours. It appears that when the business of the day was over, he delighted to descend with his favourite, and faithful, chaplain and companion, Dr. Lushington, into the cellar of the episcopal palace. The bishop would then doff his hood, saying, “There lies the doctor.” He would then divest himself of his gown, adding, “There lies the bishop.” The glasses were filled and the toast was drunk, “Here’s to thee, Lushington.” “Here’s to thee, Corbet.”

Few idiosyncrasies were more curious than that of George Selwyn, who took a morbid, and eager, interest in human suffering, united with a passionate taste for witnessing criminal executions. Not only was he a constant frequenter of such scenes of horror, but all the details of crime, the private history of the criminal, and his demeanour

\* “Temple Bar,” lxiii., 358.



on the scaffold, were to him matters of the deepest interest. "Even," writes Mr. Jesse, "the most frightful particulars relating to suicide and murder, the investigation of the disfigured corpse, the sight of an acquaintance lying in his shroud, seem to have afforded him a painful, and unaccountable, pleasure."

Numerous stories are recorded of this curious, and eccentric hobby. When the first Lord Holland was on his death-bed, he was told that Selwyn had called to inquire after his health. "The next time Mr. Selwyn calls," he said, "show him up. If I am alive I shall be delighted to see him, and if I am dead he will be glad to see me." Sir Nathaniel Wraxall relates a well-known anecdote respecting his visit to France to see Damien executed. He writes :— "Selywn's nervous irritability and anxious curiosity to observe the effect of dissolution on men exposed him to much ridicule. He was accused of attending all executions, and sometimes, in order to elude notice, disguised in a female dress. I have been assured that in 1756 he went over to Paris expressly for the purpose of witnessing the last moments of Damien, who expired under the most acute tortures for having attempted the life of Louis XV. Being among the crowd, and attempting to approach too near the scaffold, he was



at first repulsed by one of the executioners, but having informed the person that he had made the journey from London solely with a view to be present at the punishment and death of Damien, the man immediately caused the crowd to make way, exclaiming, “Faites place pour Monsieur, c’est un Anglois, et un amateur.”\*

Another well-known character who was exceedingly fond of hearing trials was Charles Mathews. It was during the assize weeks at York that he derived much of that vast stock of observation of life, and character, of which he so successfully availed himself in after years. He felt that much was to be gathered “from the contemplation of human nature under the conflicting and self-deluding position of plaintiff and defendant;” and he derived many an hour’s enjoyment from the frequently ludicrous trials at which he was present in the Civil Courts, “where originals abounded, and where the passions, in all their varieties and shades, are displayed.” Among the oft-quoted anecdotes, he was fond of relating, was an instance of *naïveté* in a witness who convulsed the court with laughter. An action was brought against the owner of a waggon, which, by the reckless driving of the waggoner, had forced

\* For another version of this story see “George Selwyn and his Contemporaries,” 1843, i., 11.



a poor donkey against a wall, and there pressed the poor creature to death. Compensation was therefore sought, by its proprietor, for the loss of the animal, and its services. This trial caused much mirth. The principal witness for the plaintiff was the driver of the donkey, who, feeling himself very much "browbeat" by the defendant's counsel, became exceedingly nervous and confused in his evidence, which he gave with his eyes upon the ground. He was several times reprimanded by the judge for not looking in the faces of those by whom he was interrogated, and was desired to hold up his head. The poor fellow's embarrassment increased upon every reproof, and the opposing counsel (who had a powerful cast in his eye) was particularly severe with him, repeating the judge's injunction several times, saying—

"Hold up your head, witness; look up. Why don't you look up, I say? Can't you hold up your head, fellow? Can't you look as I do?"

"Nay, sir," replied the countryman with perfect simplicity, "I can't—you squint."

The poor harassed witness was next asked by the supporting counsel, Serjeant Cockle, to describe the local situations of the several parties concerned—their relative positions at the time of the accident and death of the poor donkey; where the waggon was, and where the unfortunate animal



stood, &c. At last, summoning up his courage, he hesitatingly began—

“Weel, my Lord Joodge, I’ll tell you how it happened as well as I can. First of all,” turning to Serjeant Cockle, “you are the wall.”

“Very good,” said Serjeant Cockle.

“Ay, you are the wall,” repeated the witness; and then changing his position in the court to another spot, he added, “and now, I am the waggon.”

“Very well,” observed the judge, “proceed.”

“Yees,” he repeated, “I am the waggon,” and with a low bow, added, “your Lordship’s the *ass*!”

This evidence, though, perhaps, not quite satisfactory to the judge, was conclusive.

In the same way Dr. Paley’s chief amusement when in London consisted in attending the different Courts of Justice, the Old Bailey in particular, and there, from his frequent attendance and sagacity of observation, he acquired a clear, and accurate, knowledge of the criminal law. It would appear that he had developed this taste as a boy, for having one year attended the assizes at Lancaster, he was so much taken with the proceedings in the Criminal Court that, on his return to school, he used to preside there as a judge, and to have the boys brought up before him as prisoners for trial.



Lord Macaulay had a special avidity for sight-seeing, and was never so happy as when he could spend an afternoon in taking his nieces, and nephews, a round of London sights, until, to use his favourite expression, they "could not drag one leg after the other." One of these expeditions is described in a letter dated January, 1845:—"Fanny brought George and Margaret, with Charley Cropper, to the Albany, at one yesterday. I gave them for dinner fowl, ham, marrow-bones, tart, ice, olives, and champagne. I found it difficult to think of any sight for the children. However, I took them to the National Gallery, and was excessively amused with the airs of connoisseurship which Charley and Margaret gave themselves, and with George's honestly-avowed weariness, 'Let us go, there is nothing here that I care for at all.' When I put him into the carriage, he said, half sulkily, 'I do not call this seeing sights. I have seen no sights to-day.' Many a man who has laid out thirty thousand pounds on paintings would, if he spoke the truth, own that he cared as little for the art as poor George."\*

It was a grievous sight to Macaulay when his nephews and nieces grew too old for sight-seeing; or, at any rate, for seeing the same sight many times over, but he did his utmost to cultivate

\* "Life and Letters of Macaulay," ii., 96.



their taste for art. Another of Macaulay's predilections was for street ballads. He bought every halfpenny song on which he could lay hands, if only, writes Trevelyan, "it was decent, and a genuine, undoubted poem of the people." Among the gems of his collection he counted "Plato, a favourite song," commencing with a series of questions, "in which certainly it is not easy to detect traces of the literary style employed by the great dialectician":—

Says Plato, "Why should man be vain,  
Since bounteous heaven has made him great?  
Why look with insolent disdain  
On those not decked with pomp and state?"

Indulging such a curious hobby, it is not surprising that many anecdotes are related of him. According to one of those best known, he was followed from the bookstall, where he had bought a parcel of ballads, by a crowd of children, whom he overheard discussing among themselves whether, or not, the gentleman was going to sing.

Macaulay, as is well known, knew the locality and, at this period of his life, the stock-in-trade of every bookstall in London. "After office hours," says his brother Charles, "his principal relaxation was rambling about with me in the back lanes of the City. It was then that he began to talk of his idea of restoring to poetry the legends of



which it had been robbed by history, and it was in these walks that I heard for the first time, from his lips, the ‘Lays of Rome,’ which were not published until some time afterwards.”

A source of amusement, even to some grown-up children, has been in witnessing the performance of “Punch,” among these having been Charles Lamb, Douglas Jerrold, and Curran, the Irish orator. It may be remembered, too, how Dr. Battie, the eminent physician of the last century, was never happier than when making whimsical imitations of “Punch.” “By successfully mimicking this character,” writes Nichols, in the year 1782, “he is said to have saved a young patient’s life, who was in extreme misery from a swelling in his throat. When the doctor understood what the complaint was, he opened the curtains, turned his wig, and acted ‘Punch’ with so much humour and success, that the lad, thrown almost into convulsions from laughing, was so agitated as to occasion the tumour to break, and a complete cure was the instantaneous consequence.”

“Curiously enough,” says Mr. Jesse,\* “the doctor’s successful imitation of this famous puppet would seem, on another occasion, to have proved almost as effectual in preserving his own life. He had purchased a small estate, called ‘Court

\* “Celebrated Etonians,” i., 23.



Garden,' near Marlowe on the Thames; he not only took a warm interest, but risked between one and two thousand pounds, in a speculation for causing the barges to be drawn up the river by horses instead of by men. This scheme, whatever may have been its merits or demerits, rendered him, it seems, so unpopular with the bargemen, that, having one day, waylaid the doctor they were about to throw him over Marlowe Bridge, when he so enchanted them by suddenly striking up his merry imitation of 'Punch' that they took their hands off him and let him depart." In a contemporary satirical attack on him, entitled "The Battiad," his strange mimicry of "Punch" is thus referred to:—

See him with aspect grave and gentle tread,  
By slow degrees approach the sickly bed;  
Then at his club, behold him altered soon,  
The solemn doctor turns a low buffoon;  
For he who lately, in a learned freak,  
Poached every lexicon and published Greek,  
Still madly emulous of vulgar praise,  
From "Punch's" forehead wrings the dirty bays.

Lord Stowell was another indefatigable sight-seer. After his elevation to the bench he was occasionally seen coming out of the penny show-rooms in the streets of London. Among the anecdotes told of him may be quoted the following:—In the west end of Holborn there was a



room generally let for exhibitions. At the entrance Lord Stowell presented himself, eager to see "the green monster serpent," which had lately issued cards of invitation to the public. As he was pulling out his purse to pay for admission, a sharp, but honest, north-country lad, whose business it was to take the money, recognized him as an old customer, and knowing his name, thus addressed him: "We can't take your shilling, my lord; 'tis t' old serpent, which you have seen six times before in other colours; but ye shall go in and see her." He entered, saved his money, and enjoyed the seventh visit to the painted beauty.

From Shelley's habit of fabricating paper boats the transition was natural to a more substantial kind of enjoyment. "His favourite taste was boating. When living near the Thames, or by the Lake of Geneva, much of his life was spent on the water. On the shore of every lake, or stream, or sea, near which he dwelt, he had a boat moored." A summer voyage of indolent enjoyment, down some woodland river—spent from sunrise to moonlight in watching the changes of the heavens—such seems to have been his greatest luxury, and, the intense pleasure which he derived from it, renders it his favourite source of comparison for



other delights; as when music is represented as wafting the soul—

Far, far away into the regions dim,  
Of rapture; like a boat, with swift sails, winging  
Its way down some many-winding river.

To such days of wood and river wandering we owe the magnificent scenery in “*Alastor*,” and the river voyage at the end of the “*Revolt of Islam*.” At a much later period of his life, the same sentiment vents itself in one of his last poems :—

Our boat is asleep on Serchio's stream,  
And its wings are folded like thoughts in a dream.

\* \* \* \* \*

The chain is loosed, the sails are spread,  
The living breath is fresh behind,  
As, with dews and sunrise fed,  
Comes the laughing morning wind.  
The sails are full, the boat makes head  
Against the Serchio's torrent fierce,  
Then flags with intermitting course,  
And hangs upon the wave,  
Which, fervid from its mountain source,  
Shallow, smooth, and strong doth come.

Shelley's water nymphs were not only those of the lake or the river, the sea having had an inexhaustible source of delight for his fancy—a passion to which he, alas, owed his death.

Speaking of Shelley's poetic water hobbies, we may note that it was a more prosaic turn of mind which made Robert Stephenson almost of neces-



any indulgence in aquatic amusements. When the morning is so misty London men of business, the sun was no less. To my dining-room within the hour he would have been followed by clients and letters; but now, happily! what he was safe from the intrusion of callers and rape of postmen. His first yacht, the "Titania," was destroyed by fire at Cowes, much to the consternation of his cousin, George Robert Stephenson, at whose disposal he had placed it. Having ordered her to be lighted on board, and the yacht prepared for the reception of himself and family, his docklings were carried out with such enormous zeal that an accidental fire led to the destruction of the vessel. Hastening up to London to announce the accident to his cousin, he found him entertaining a party of friends, who had just sat down to dinner. The wine and fish were still on the table.

"What longer you here?" he asked, in surprise.

"Bad news, Robert," was the reply. "I ordered the 'Titania' to be got ready for me, to take me, and my family, a few days' cruise; and—she's burnt to the water."

But Robert, good-naturedly thinking less of his own loss than of his cousin's vexation, took the matter in a calm light.



“ Well, well, man, don’t be annoyed. You couldn’t help it. Sit down and have your dinner. We’ll talk about it over a glass of wine.”

Presently, after hearing the full particulars, he said —

“ Never mind, old boy, we’ll have a finer vessel than the *old* ‘ Titania ’ before we are many months older.”

How Robert Stephenson was driven to this aquatic hobby may be gathered from the following letter to Admiral Moorsom, in which he describes his “ sea lodging-house,” as he termed his yacht :—

“ 24, Great George Street,  
“ May 25th, 1852.

“ MY DEAR ADMIRAL MOORSOM,

“ I find I can get no peace on land. I am therefore preparing another sea lodging-house. I find it no easy matter to get rid of a multitude of questions which follow on a tolerably long professional life. Indeed, I find that nothing gives me actual freedom from attack but getting out of the way of the postman.

“ The sea, therefore, is my only alternative. Ships have no knockers, happily.

“ Faithfully yours,

“ ROBERT STEPHENSON.”



Edmund Kean, again, whenever he could snatch an afternoon from his theatrical duties, would indulge in his aquatic proclivities by rowing, assuming in the evening his accustomed characters, when "he was the cynosure of all eyes, stirring them to ecstacy or subduing them to tears at will."

Lord Westbury, like Henry Fawcett, was an excellent oar. In 1830 he took a small house at Putney, close to the "Star and Garter," and overlooking the river. Friends joined him in the evening, and occasionally, when the number allowed, an eight was manned, which Bethell stroked. On more than one occasion he and his brother-in-law rowed from Sunbury to the Temple Stairs. During the long vacation of 1848 it happened that Vice-Chancellor Shadwell and his daughters were at Maelswch Castle, a few miles distant from Llangoed, Brecon, where Mr. Bethell—as he was then—had rented a house for shooting and salmon fishing. Throughout this period the two families joined in numerous picnics, and in many a boating, and fishing, excursion. One day the two eminent lawyers, stroking rival boats with carefully picked crews, engaged in a race which, amid deafening cheers from the bank, resulted in a dead heat.\*

\* "Life of Lord Westbury," i., 94-95.



Byron's celebrated swimming feats have long ago become proverbial, for he excelled in this as in most other out-door exercises. T. Assheton Smith was a good swimmer and oarsman, and the late Lord Hatherley was quite at home in the water. Sydney Smith was another capital swimmer, and was in the habit of giving every encouragement to this necessary accomplishment, considering it as productive of health as it certainly is valuable in preserving life. Warren Hastings exhibited a proficiency in boating and swimming; Sir Thomas Munro having been fond of the latter.

As a fencer, David Garrick was held in high repute, while some men, like Assheton Smith and Charles Lever, were good hands in a pugilistic encounter, amusing anecdotes connected with which are told of both.

The third Earl Spencer made a real study of boxing, taking lessons from the best instructors, whilst practising most assiduously and with great success. He had many matches with his school-fellow, Lord Byron, with whom it appears to have been also a favourite pursuit. Those who witnessed his exploits with the gloves, writes Sir Denis Le Marchant,\* "and observed his cool and steady eye, his broad chest and muscular limbs,

\* "Memoir of Earl Spencer," 1876, 140.



and, above all, felt his hard blows, would have been justified in saying ‘that he was born to be a prize-fighter rather than a Minister of State.’ Even when a Minister he sometimes startled his colleagues by a display of knowledge on this subject, by way of illustration, which they could not help thinking rather misapplied.”

“How deeply rooted were these feelings could not be more graphically described,” adds his biographer, “than by the following extract from a letter addressed to me by his friend Mr. Evelyn Denison (afterwards Speaker of the House of Commons):—‘When we were at Wiseton something was said about a recent case of stabbing with a knife. Lord Spencer observed that, in his opinion, cases of stabbing arose from the habit of boxing having been discouraged. The *pros* and *cons* of boxing were discussed. Lord Spencer became eloquent. He said his conviction of the advantages of boxing was so strong that he had been seriously considering whether it was not a duty, he owed to the public, to go and attend every prize-fight which took place, and so to encourage the noble science to the extent of his power. It was the one time in my life, in the House of Commons or out of it, that I heard him speak with eagerness, and almost with passion. He gave us an account of prize-fights which he had attended, how he had seen



Mendoza knocked down for the first five or six rounds by Humphreys, and seeming almost beat, till the Jews got their money on, when, a hint having been giving him, he began in earnest and soon turned the tables. He described the fight between Gully and "The Chicken." How he rode down to Brickill; how he was loitering about the inn-door, when a barouche and four drove up with Lord Byron and a party, and Jackson, the trainer; how they all dined together, and how pleasant it had been.'"

The principal amusement of Cheselden, the surgeon, was in witnessing pugilistic encounters, and "Barry Cornwall" relates how, in his younger days, he was a scientific pugilist.

Charles James Fox was fond of theatricals, and at one time lost no opportunity of indulging his taste in this direction. As Trevelyan writes, there is "something comical, and rather taking, in the eagerness with which Fox canvassed the histrionic capabilities of all his friends and relations. Every chance acquaintance, whom he picked up on the Continent, was forthwith enlisted in his troop, and thrust straight into the leading business, even though the unlucky recruit might never have learned the lines of Virgil correctly all the while he was at Eton. 'Your sister,' he writes to Fitzpatrick from Florence,



‘is a very good actress. Lady Sarah’s fame is well known. She acted extremely well in the comedy. Carlisle is not an excellent actor, but will make a very useful one. Peter Brodie is the best manager-prompter in the world. We want another actor or two, but much more another actress. There are few comedies that do not require above two women.’ But when,” adds his biographer, “under the combined excitement afforded by the prospect of an heir and a seat in Parliament, poor Stephen Fox allowed his dramatic ardour to flag, the stern indignation of his younger brother was positively impressive. ‘He does not,’ exclaimed Charles, ‘so much as even mention acting in any of his letters; but I hope his enthusiasm (for such it was last year) will return. Indeed, it will be very absurd if he has built a theatre for nothing.’”

From 1773, however, Fox concerned himself no more with a pastime which was at best but an imitation of an imitation, and gave his undistracted powers to an art in which his success had been as signal, and as instantaneous, as the success of Garrick on the stage. Yet it was no slight advantage “to a great extempore speaker to have at hand an extensive, and dignified, stock of quotations from that branch of literature which is nearly akin to oratory; and for such a speaker it is essential that



the voice, no less than the memory and the reasoning faculty, should be under absolute control." The time evidently had not been lost, for that "laborious discipline in the theory and practice of elocution through which Fox was carried by the disinterested passion for the drama had gained him a command of accent and gesture which, as is always the case with the highest art, gave his marvellous rhetoric the strength and simplicity of nature."

Another lover of the theatre was Dr. Paley. He frequently attended the play—particularly Drury Lane, when Garrick was performing. He generally went into the pit, seating himself as near to the orchestra as possible. Gibbon, again, in his early life, was a theatre-goer; and Oliver Goldsmith, it may be remembered, had a passion for the stage—a taste which it would seem acted as a powerful stimulus to him in developing his literary talents.

"It has been said," writes Faraday's niece, "that my uncle liked to go to the theatre, and it has been concluded that he went very often; but really he went very seldom. He enjoyed a play most when he was tired, and when Mrs. Faraday could go with him. They walked to the theatre, and went to the pit, and it was the greatest rest to him. Sometimes, when she had a friend stay-



ing with her, he would go alone to the theatre, at half-price. For many seasons he had a free admission to the opera, and that he enjoyed very much ; but he went only a very few times in the year, three or four at the most."

When the opportunity for amusement came, Sir Charles Barry could always throw himself into it with all the delight of a schoolboy. In theatrical entertainments he always took the greatest pleasure, and found in them the most complete relaxation and change of idea.

James Brindley was once persuaded to see a play, but his ideas were so much confused by witnessing it that he declared it had rendered him unfit for business, and he would on no account be present at another performance.

But, with few exceptions, the stage has always been a popular source of recreation, and, from the multiplicity of theatres in recent years, is evidently a fashionable taste much on the increase.



## CHAPTER III.

### CARD-PLAYING.

Samuel Johnson — Addison — Cowper — Gibbon — Charles James Fox—General Scott—Dr. Parr—Dr. Paley—Sir Robert Peel—Duke of Wellington—Tippoo Smith—Lord Rivers—Sir Philip Francis—Augustus Toplady—John Wesley—G. H. Drummond—Charles Lamb—Lord Raglan—Lord Lytton—W. E. Forster—Douglas Jerrold—Charles Dickens—George Grote—Lord Stanhope—George C. Lewis—T. H. Buckle—H. Fawcett—John Smeaton—Duke of Queensberry—Southey—Charles Lever—Captain Marryat—John Locke—Dean Milner.

TALLEYRAND, whose devotion to whist was extraordinary, remarked of someone who confessed his ignorance of it, that his want of knowledge was preparing him for a miserable old age. Setting aside the evil of making card-playing the occasion for gambling rather than, as it should be, a pleasing social recreation, there can be no doubt that it has been of immense service to our great intellectual workers, as a seductive opiate in their busy life. Indeed, the hour or two spent, in this fashion, has in numerous instances been almost a necessity to many a weary brain overdone by pressure of work, besides, as Talleyrand



says of old age, being an ever pleasant enjoyment to the greatest leaders of thought when failing health and declining years compel them to “retire from business.”

Dr. Johnson, it may be remembered, regretted that he had not learnt to play at cards, assigning as his reason:—“It is very useful in life; it generates kindness, and consolidates society.” And yet, by one of those strange inconsistencies sometimes noticeable in eminent men, he thus writes in the tenth number of the *Rambler*:—“My business has been to view, as opportunity has offered, every place in which mankind was to be seen; but at card-tables, however brilliant, I have always thought my visit lost; for I could know nothing of the company but their clothes and their faces.” In the last century, however, the inordinate excess to which card-playing was carried in English society, “everyone—old and young, high and low—joining in this time-destroying passion,” at times caused just censure even from those who did not profess to be stern moralists. Many, too, were not satisfied with playing for play’s sake, forgetful of Lord Herbert’s excellent advice to —

Play not for gain, but sport.

Who plays for more

Than he can lose with pleasure, stakes his heart,  
Perhaps his wife’s, too, and whom she hath bore.



Addison, in the *Spectator*, muses upon the singularity of the taste of the card-player who devotes several hours in succession to this mode of killing time, and says : “ I think it very wonderful to see persons of the best sense passing away a dozen hours together in shuffling, and dividing, a pack of cards, with no other conversation but what is made up of a few game phrases, or no ideas but those of black and red spots ranged together in different figures. Would not a man laugh to hear anyone of his species complaining that life is short ? ”

Cowper, again, in his “ Task,” speaks of this widespread fashion, and tells us how —

E'en misses, at whose age their mothers wore  
The back-string and the bib, assume the dregs  
Of womanhood, fit pupils in the school  
Of card-devoted time, and night by night,  
Placed at some vacant corner of the board,  
Learn'd every trick, and soon play all the game.

In the course of the last century whist became a fashionable game, and as such was played by the leading men of the day. Horace Walpole writes in December, 1781, to one of his constant correspondents, thus : “ I was diverted last night at Lady Lucan's. The moment I entered she set me down to whist with Lady Bute ; and who do you think were the other partners ?—the Archbishopress of Canterbury and Mr. Gibbon. I



once saved Lady Suffolk at the Dowager Essex's from playing at the same table with Lady Yarmouth. I saw Lady Suffolk ready to sink, and took her cards from her, saying, 'I know your ladyship hates whist, and I will play instead of you.' "

Gibbon, while at Lusanne, in his declining years, also tells us that after the morning had been occupied by the labours of the library he used to "unbend rather than exercise his mind," and, in the interval between tea and supper, was far from disdaining the innocent amusement of a game at cards.

Charles Fox played an admirable game both at whist and piquet, and with such skill, indeed, that it was generally admitted, at Brooks's Club, he might have made four thousand pounds a year, at these games, if he could have confined himself to them.

Another great whist-player was General Scott, the father-in-law of George Canning and the Duke of Portland, who was known to have won at White's £200,000, thanks to his notorious sobriety, and knowledge of the game. One reason of his success was his avoidance of those indulgences at the table which muddled other men's brains. By dining off such simple fare as boiled chicken, with toast and water, he sat down to the



whist-table with a clear head, and by the help of his remarkable memory, and his great coolness of judgment, seldom failed to be successful.

Dr. Parr's favourite game was whist. But no persuasion could induce him to depart from a resolution, which he adopted early in life, of never playing in any company whatever for more than a nominal stake. Upon one occasion only he had been induced, contrary to his will, to play with a certain bishop for a shilling, which he won. Pushing it carefully to the bottom of his pocket, and placing his hand upon it, with a kind of mock solemnity, "There, my lord bishop," said he, "this is a trick of the devil; but I'll match him. So now, if you please, we will play for a penny." And this was ever after the amount of his stake. On another occasion, being engaged with a party in which he was unequally matched, he was asked by a lady how the fortune of the game turned, when he replied, "Pretty well, madam, considering that I have three adversaries."

Another skilful player at whist was Dr. Paley. Although he frequently mixed in card parties, yet he would at all times readily forego the game for conversation with an intelligent companion. A lady once observed to him, at a card-table at Lincoln, "that the only excuse for their playing was that it served to kill time." "The



best defence possible, madam," replied he ;  
"though time in the end will kill us."

Sir Robert Peel was not above a game of cards, and in the "Life of Norman Macleod" (i., 71) there is a charming little anecdote illustrative of his social pleasantry when out of harness:—

"One night Mr. Gaskill was at a party at the Duke of ——'s. Peel, Wellington, and some others were playing whist. Croker was learning écarté at another table.

" 'Go,' said Peel, to one of his friends, 'go and ask if he ever learned the game before.'

" 'Never,' said Croker, 'upon my soul !'

" 'Well,' said Peel, to his friend, who returned, 'I'll bet in *twenty* minutes by my watch, Croker will tell his teacher that he does not know how to play.'

"In *five* minutes Croker was heard saying—

" 'Well, do you know, I should not have thought *that* the best way of playing.'

"This was received with a roar of laughter."

The mention of the Duke of Wellington reminds us that although a card-player he was by no means a gamester. According to his own declaration, "in the whole course of his life he never won or lost twenty pounds at any game, and that he never played at hazard, or any game of chance, in any public place or club." He was, in fact, the



very reverse of the great Blücher, who repeatedly lost everything at play, "having never been known to play deep at any game but war or politics." At the same time, it may be remembered that the Duke of Wellington was justly annoyed by the following statement as to his gambling propensities, which appeared a few years after the battle of Waterloo, in a French book, entitled, "*L'Académie des Jeux, par Philidor*," and which was published in this country under the title of "*Rouge et noir; or, the Academies*:"—"That great captain, who gained, if not laurels, an immense treasure, on the plains of Wa\*\*\*\*oo, besides that fortune transmitted to him by the English people, was impoverished in a few months by the ignoble passion." Happily, the Duke did not allow this public scandal to remain long uncontradicted, and proved, by the declaration quoted above, how cruelly groundless it was.\*

At the commencement of the present century there was a great deal of high play at White's and Brooks's, especially at whist. At the latter club figured some remarkable characters, as Tippoo Smith, by common consent the best whist-player of his day, and an old gentleman nick-named

\* See correspondence on the subject in Steinmetz's "*Gaming Table*," i., 342-345.



Neptune, from his having once flung himself into the sea in a fit of despair at being, as he thought, ruined. Fortunately he was rescued in time, found he was not ruined, and played on during the remainder of his life. Then, at White's, a distinguished player was Lord Rivers, the nobleman who was presented at the salons in Paris as *Le Wellington des Joueurs*. But, clever and careful player as he was, he once lost three thousand four hundred pounds, at whist, by not remembering that the seven of hearts was in.

Sir Philip Francis, the eminent politician, to whom the celebrated "letters of Junius" have been attributed, was fond of cards. He was one of the convivial companions of Charles J. Fox, and, during the short administration of that statesman, he was made a Knight of the Bath. One evening Roger Wilbraham came up to the whist table at Brooks's, where Sir Philip—who for the first time wore the ribbon of the Order—was engaged in a rubber, and thus accosted him —

"So this is the way they have rewarded you at last; they have given you a little bit of red ribbon for your services, Sir Philip, have they? A pretty bit of red ribbon to hang about your neck, and that satisfies you, does it? Now I wonder what I shall get? What do you think they will give me, Sir Philip?"



The newly-made knight, who had twenty-five guineas depending on the rubber, and who was not very well pleased at the interruption, suddenly turned round, and looking at him in an angry manner, exclaimed —

“A halter.”

The Rev. Augustus Toplady, so well known for his high Calvinistic principles, used occasionally to amuse himself with a game at cards, and in a letter dated “Broad Hembury, Nov. 19, 1773,” speaks of the recreations in which clergymen may innocently indulge, and winds up by saying —

“I cannot condemn the Vicar of Broad Hembury [himself] for relaxing himself now and then among a few select friends with a rubber of sixpenny whist, a pool of penny quadrille, or a few rounds of twopenny Pope Joan. To my certain knowledge the said vicar has been cured of headache by one, or other, of these games after spending eight, ten, or twelve, and sometimes sixteen hours in the study. Nor will he ask any man’s leave for so unbending himself, because another person’s conscience is no rule to his, any more than another person’s stature or complexion.”

John Wesley, when a young man at college, appears to have been fond of a game of whist. Tate Wilkinson, writing in the year 1790, says:—  
“Mr. Wesley, about four years ago, in the fields



at Leeds, for want of room for his congregation in his tabernacle, gave an account of himself by informing us that when he was at college he was particularly fond of the devil's pops, or cards, and said that every Saturday he was one of a constant party at whist, not only for the afternoon, but also for the evening." The last Saturday he ever played at cards the rubber at whist was longer than he expected, "and, on observing the tediousness of the game, he pulled out his watch, and to his shame he found it was some minutes past eight, which was beyond the time he had appointed to meet the Lord. He thought the devil had certainly tempted him beyond his hour; he therefore suddenly gave his cards to a gentleman near him to finish the game, and went to the place appointed, beseeching forgiveness for his crime, and resolved never to play with the devil's pops again. That resolution he never broke."

According to Captain Gronow, George Harley Drummond, of the famous banking house, Charing Cross, only played once in his whole life at White's Club, at whist, on which occasion he lost £20,000 to Brummell. This was a terrible blow, causing him to retire from the banking house of which he was a partner. It was one of those painful incidents in the annals of card-playing



which moralists have not failed to utilize in condemning what has been termed "a social vice." But, considering the immense relief a game of whist has afforded the irritable, and over-worked brain of our busy men, it must be admitted that happily such cases are comparatively rare.

Poor Charles Lamb loved his whist. It was of great service to him, and what better insight can we have, into his thoughts, on the subject than are found in his article on whist-playing? It is recorded that he said once to a brother whist-player "who was a hand more clever than clean, and who had enough in him to afford the joke, 'M., if dirt were trumps what hands you would hold!'" Lord Raglan made cards one of his recreations, and was singularly dexterous in shuffling and dealing them.

Edward Bulwer, Lord Lytton, was fond of card-playing, but he was at no time a gamester. He found in the combinations of card-playing, writes his son,\* "a pleasant stimulant to the faculties of observation, and judgment, which were at all times active in his nature." In games of cards, moreover, it is necessary, at least for the habitual player, to study not only the cards themselves, and the various combinations of which they are capable, but also the peculiarities of the persons

\* "Life of Lord Lytton," ii., 156.



who play them, which, in itself, had for him an inexhaustible interest. Whist and piquet were the games he relished and studied most, because in them the result depends more upon skill than luck; and from practice, and aptitude, combined he soon became, not a first-rate, but an exceedingly good whist-player, to a degree which made his winnings an appreciable addition to his income.

Lord Lyndhurst loved a bit of fun. In his own private circle his kindly humour was irresistible, and he delighted in testing its powers. "I remember his first essay of it on me," writes Miss Stewart,\* "when I was rather alarmed at having to be his partner at whist. I pleaded in vain my ignorance. I assured him that 'to follow suit' was the only rule of whist I knew. 'You are to play with me.' I saw his eyes twinkle at some of my blunders, but he did not expose them, while he perceived that I was afraid of his being annoyed by them. When, however, I made a second revoke, there came a hearty peal of laughter, and afterwards, 'Your play is more amusing than that of the most famous players.' I was not slow to join in his merriment, and I felt, in that slight incident, how easily he could bring people to like him."

"The fact that a man so earnest and little

\* "Life of Lord Lyndhurst," 509.



inclined for frivolity as W. E. Forster was a most enthusiastic whist-player, proves," writes Mr. James Payn,\* "the need that almost every nature frets for some sort of relaxation. He never, indeed, wasted his time at it, or gave up a single hour to it, so far as I know, that was owed to more serious matters; but when he was playing I think he enjoyed the game more than any man I ever knew. If there were only two other men he would play dummy; if one only, double dummy. And yet he was very much the reverse of a good player. Perhaps he began it too late in life, which is fatal to excellence, even with the most intelligent; but the fact is, he hardly ever got through a rubber quite to his own satisfaction, and still less to that of his partner.

"On the other hand, in sweetness of temper, and immobility to the worst that fortune could do for him in the way of ill luck, he had, in my experience, no equal. He liked the excitement of the game, and was willing, and even eager, to have a bet on it in addition to the ordinary stakes, but of the greed of the gambler he had absolutely nothing. He did not seem to care one halfpenny except for the mere passing triumph of winning, and, considering his play, he was on the whole lucky, whether he won

\* "Life of W. E. Forster," T. Wemyss Reid, ii., 473-4.



or lost. The vulgar phrase about paying and looking pleasant—a difficult feat, as it would seem, for the great majority of whist-players—might have been invented to suit him, so exactly did it describe his behaviour in adversity. Whist was to him a far greater amusement than to most men, but it went no further; it was never that serious business of life which it is so often made. He was always full of fun over it, did not in the least mind having his own play animadverted upon (though he was never spared, by any means, for the Board of Green Cloth is no respecter of persons), and was never irritated by any mistake of his partner. One afternoon he had won a good many rubbers of me, and it is quite possible that I may have looked resentful at him for the partiality with which Fortune was treating him. ‘If it would be any satisfaction to you, my dear fellow,’ he said, with his humorous smile, ‘and a relief to your feelings to call me Buckshot, do it.’ ”

When the work of the day was over Douglas Jerrold would occasionally take a hand at whist, which he enjoyed, occasionally causing continued bursts of laughter by his amusing anecdotes. Indeed, it was impossible, when he was in one of his merry, talkative moods, for even the most prosaic mortal, not to take pleasure in his cheery conversational chit-chat.



Charles Dickens has given an amusing and thoroughly characteristic sketch of card-playing across the Atlantic, when he made his first visit during his journey to America. "*Apropos* of rolling, I have forgot to mention that in playing whist we are obliged to put the tricks in our pockets, to keep them from disappearing altogether, and that five or six times, in the course of every rubber, we are all flung from our seats, roll out at different doors, and keep on rolling until we are picked up by stewards. This has become such a matter of course, that we go through it with perfect gravity, and, when we are bolstered up on our sofas, again resume our conversation, or our game, at the point where it was interrupted." He adds that however much this might overtax the credulity of his readers, yet it had occurred more than once.

George Grote did not despise a game of whist. "On one evening," writes his wife, "we, that is to say, Lord Stanhope, Dr. William Smith, Lady Stanhope, and myself, sat down to whist. After a while Dr. Smith said across the table, 'Mrs. G., just turn your head round and see what is going on yonder.' I did so, and beheld the Dean of St. Paul's, the historian of Greece, and the erudite scholar, George C. Lewis, all intently occupied in the same way as ourselves. It was, indeed, a



very amusing spectacle to us." Mr. Reeve was the fourth player at this unique whist table. Buckle was fond of a game of whist, and in early life frequently passed an hour in this amusement, considering himself a good player, and in this respect he was not unlike Henry Fawcett.

John Smeaton and his wife enjoyed the friendship of the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry, who had a great love of card-playing, which Smeaton detested. But his good-nature would not permit him to hold aloof when asked to take a hand. He played, however, writes Smiles, like a boy, his attention never following the game. On one occasion, when it was Pope Joan, and the stake in "Pope" had accumulated to a considerable sum, it became Smeaton's turn by the deal to double it. Regardless of his cards, he took up a scrap of paper, made some calculations on it, and laid it on the table. The Duchess eagerly asked what it was. He replied, "Your Grace will recollect that the field in which my house at Austhorpe stands may be about five acres, three roods, and seven perches, which at thirty years' purchase will be just my stake; and if your Grace will make a Duke of me, I presume the winner will not dislike my mortgage." The hint thus given in a joke was kindly taken, and, from that time, they never played but for the merest trifle.



Southey played at cards, although he often did so more for the sake of being sociable than from any great love of this mode of diversion. "It is quite right," he remarks, "that there should be a heavy duty on cards; not only on moral grounds, not only because they act on a social party like a torpedo, silencing the merry voice, and numbing the play of the features; not only to still the hunger of the public purse, which, reversing the quality of Fortunatus's, is always empty, however much you may put into it; but also because every pack of cards is a malicious libel upon Courts, and on the world, seeing that the trumpery card with number one at the head is the best part of them, and that it gives kings and queens no other companions than knaves." And yet Southey invented a game at cards. "Last night, in bed, before I could fall asleep," he writes,\* "my head ran upon cards, at which I had been compelled to play in the evening, and I thought thus of making a new pack:

"Leave out the eights, nines, and tens as at quadrille.

"In their place substitute another suit, ten in number, like the rest, blue in colour, and in name *balls*. The pack then consists of fifty. Add two

\* "Commonplace Book," 4th Series, 517.



figured personages to make up the number—the Emperor and the Pope.

“Play as at whist. Balls take all other suits except trumps, which take balls. The Emperor and the Pope are superior to all other cards, and may either be made equal and so capable of tieing each other, and so neutralizing the trick, or to preponderate according to the colour of the trump—the Emperor if red, the Pope if black—and, belonging to no suit, they may be played upon any. If either be turned up, the dealer counts one, and balls remain the only trumps.

“The Emperor and Pope being led, command trumps, but not each other. Trumps also, in default of trumps, command balls. If the Emperor and the Pope tie each other, the tier has the lead.”

Whist parties, with a chosen few, were a delight to Charles Lever. So fond of whist was he, that although, writes Baron Erlanger, “he loved his literary pursuits, no panegyric, about his last book, would have given him as much satisfaction, as an acknowledgment of his superiority at whist. He loved the game beyond anything. A continuous roar of laughter accompanied the game, which often lasted till late in the night. Every



mistake gave rise to a new anecdote or some droll remark."

On another occasion when he was playing whist a member of his household was about to retire to rest, when Lever whispered, "Don't go, I'm winning; the luck may turn if you withdraw." That night he retrieved some previous losses, winning not less than £200. Many such anecdotes are told of him, most of which illustrate his genial, humorous nature.

Nothing provoked him so much as to find men who took no interest in the game, for he would remind them of the terrible warning of Talleyrand, impressing upon them "how much of human nature that would otherwise be unprofitable can be made available by whist! What scores of tiresome old twaddlers are there who can still serve their country as whisters! What feeble intelligences that can flicker out into a passing brightness at the sight of the 'turned trump!'" "Think of this," he added, warmly, "and think what is to become of us when the old, the feeble, the tiresome, and the interminable will all be thrown broadcast over society without any object or an occupation. Imagine what bores will be let loose upon the world, and fancy how feeble will be all efforts of wit or pleasantry to season a mass of such incapables!"



It would seem, too, that when through ill-health Lever lost his spirits he still retained his love of whist. Thus Sir Henry James writes:—"In September, 1871, I paid him a visit at Trieste, which lasted some three or four days. He was residing there with his daughters, Miss Lever, and Mrs. Watson. He was suffering much from gout, and was by no means in good spirits. He rarely exercised his anecdotal power, and his chief pleasure seemed to be in playing whist."

Piquet was the favourite game of Captain Marryat. But this pastime did not take him away from his home. Indeed, as Florence Marryat tells us in the biography of her father, it was one of the attractions of his home, causing him to teach his children to play it sufficiently well to be his opponents. But, in order that their interest, in the performance, might emulate his own, the stake invariably consisted of sugar plums, which were provided by himself.

On the other hand, amongst those who have discouraged card-playing may be mentioned the famous John Locke, who, in his "Treatise on Education," says:—"As to cards and dice, I think the safest, and best, way is never to learn any play upon them, and so to be incapacitated for those dangerous temptations and incroaching



wasters of useful time." Le Clerc\* relates an amusing anecdote respecting Locke. Three or four men of rank met him by appointment at the house of Lord Ashley, afterwards Earl of Shaftesbury, and, before there had been any time for conversation, cards were introduced, and the visitors sat down to play. Locke, after looking on awhile, drew out his tablets and sat down to write; whereupon one of the company, observing how he was employed, asked him what he was writing. "My lord," replied he, "I am endeavouring to profit as much as I can from your company, for having impatiently longed to be present at a meeting of the most sensible, and witty, men of the day, and having at last that good fortune, I thought that I could not do better than write down your conversation. I have, indeed, here put down the substance of what has been said for the last hour or two." The satire was immediately felt, and the players quitted the game.

General Wolfe, when a young man, writing to his mother on the subject of card-playing, very sensibly says:—"Though I am not particularly fond of cards myself, yet I think they are seasonable, and innocent, instruments of diversion, and I am always sorry when I suffer myself to censure

\* "Eloge de Mr. Locke dans la Bibliothèque Choisie," tom. vi., 357.



any entertainment that is quite harmless because it is not to my taste."

Dean Milner gave up playing at cards long before he entertained any thoughts respecting their propriety or the reverse, because, he says, "it ran away with time which would otherwise have been better employed." He further used to add, "my fingers were so often stained by operations in the laboratory, that I was really ashamed to exhibit them."

But although, from religious and other reasons, card-playing has found antagonists among our eminent men in past years, it has afforded harmless and beneficial amusement to the majority of our intellectual workers. So long as prudence, and moderation, influence this pleasing diversion, there is little fear of its forfeiting the popularity which it has rightly earned.



## CHAPTER IV.

### FIELD SPORTS.

Duke of Wellington—Sir C. J. Napier—Peter Beckford—  
Duke of Cleveland—William Pitt—Lord Raglan—Lord  
Eldon—C. J. Fox—Lord Cardigan—Marquis Clan-  
ricarde—Anthony Trollope—Charles Kingsley—Whyte  
Melville—Assheton Smith—Earl Fitzwilliam—John  
Leech—Lord Mayo—Lord Fitzhardinge—Earl Wilton—  
Sir Tatton Sykes—John Metcalf—Rev. John Russell—  
Sir Francis Chantrey—Sheridan—Sydney Smith—Lord  
Malmesbury—Horatio Ross—W. E. Forster—Lord  
Eversley—Lord Westbury—Tom Hood.

THE pleasures of the chase, whilst forming some of the most charming scenes in the literature of the past, have always held one of the highest places of honour amongst our national sports. The records of the hunting-field of to-day simply re-echo the practices of bygone years, when the same enthusiastic love of adventure afforded an attractive inducement, for leaving the weightier matter of life, in search of the pleasures of the field.

Thus, in the fourteenth century, an occupant of



the Episcopal bench, Reginald Brian, Bishop of Worcester, writes to his brother, Bishop of St. David's, to remind him of a promised gift of some hounds. His heart languishes, he says, for their arrival. "Let them come, then, oh! reverend father, without delay; let my woods re-echo with the music of their cry and the cheerful notes of the horn, and let the walls of my palace be decorated with the trophies of the chase."

The Duke of Wellington, following the example of Edward III.—who when engaged in the French war had with him his staghounds and harriers—throughout the Peninsula campaign, kept a pack of hounds at headquarters, chasing the foxes quite as vigorously and successfully as he did the French. According to Mr. Gleig, "he caused his hounds to travel in the rear of the army, and had more than one day's hunting in the intervals of battles. They were regularly kennelled in Toulouse, where many a French gentleman saw for the first time—himself vainly striving to keep pace with the field—what English fox-hunting was." Indeed, almost to the close of his life, he was attracted by the hunting-field; and in the year 1826 he urges as an excuse for not answering a letter of Mr. Robinson's that "the usual sports of the autumn occupied him."

One would naturally have supposed that Sir



Charles James Napier was an enthusiastic sportsman, judging from his love of horse-exercise ; but, great as would otherwise have been the animation of the chase, his gentle feelings forbade the taste.

“We are all,” he wrote in the year 1843 of himself and his brothers, “a hot, violent crew, with the milk of human kindness ; though we were all fond of hunting, fishing, and shooting, yet all gave them up when young because we had no pleasure in killing little animals. Lately, in the camp, a hare got up, the greyhounds pursued, and the men all shouted to aid the dogs. My sorrow was great and I rode away ; yet at dinner I ate a poor fowl. It is not principle, therefore, on which we act, it is painful feeling. As to cat-hunting and dog-fighting, feeling and principle unite to condemn. A domestic animal confides in you, and is at your mercy ; a wild animal has some fair play, a domestic one none. Cat-hunters and dog-hunters are, therefore, not only cruel, but traitors. No polished gentleman does these things.”

Peter Beckford, a type of the best class of sportsmen at the close of the last century, was a ripe scholar, and an accomplished fox-hunter. He regarded the killing of the fox as the main end, and object of a day’s hunting, and thus writes :



“Sport is but a secondary consideration with a true fox-hunter. The first is the killing of the fox; hence arises the eagerness of the pursuit and the chief pleasure of the chase. I confess I consider blood so necessary, to a pack of fox-hounds, that I always return home better pleased with an indifferent chase, with death at the end of it, than with the best chase possible if it ends with the loss of the fox. I remember to have heard an odd anecdote of the late Duke of R—, who was very popular in his neighbourhood. A butcher at Lyndhurst, a lover of the sport, as often as he heard the hounds return from hunting, came out to meet them, and never failed to ask the Duke what sport he had had.

“Very good, I thank you, honest friend.”

“Has your Grace killed a fox?”

“No, we have had a good run, but we have not killed.”

“Pshaw!” cried the butcher, with an arch look, pointing at him at the same time with his finger; and this was so constantly repeated that the Duke, when he had not killed a fox, used to say he was afraid to meet his butcher.”

A loving patron of English sports was the Duke of Cleveland, and never was he happier than when out with his hounds. Some idea of his success in the hunting-field may be gathered



from such an entry as the following in the book kept at Raby Castle :—“ Killed eighty-eight foxes, earthed twenty-one ; *blank days, none.*”

William Pitt would occasionally hunt, more for the sake of exercise than from any real pleasure he took in the sport, and was very unlike C. J. Fox.

In defiance of nature, writes Trevelyan,\* which seems to have modelled him for any other class of pursuits, Fox was an ardent, a many-sided, and, in some departments, a most accomplished sportsman. “ If it was possible for him,” he adds, “ to enjoy himself more at one time than another, he was most actively alive to the charm of existence when behind his pointers or his spaniels. And like all men of his temperament, he shot better after advancing years had taken off the first edge of his keenness.

A remarkable characteristic of Lord Raglan† was prominently developed through the loss of his arm by a stray shot, which shattered his elbow, as he was riding with the Duke of Wellington, and General Alava, from the bloody field of Waterloo. Even when his arm was cut off, not a groan, not a sigh, not a remark came from him ; the only remark he uttered being the touching

\* “ Early History of C. J. Fox,” 456.

† At this time Lord FitzRoy.



words, "Hullo! don't carry away that arm till I have taken off my ring!" The ring, which had occupied more of his thoughts than the pain, was the gift of his wife, and in the midst of his sufferings his whole consideration was for her. The morning after the amputation he began practising writing with his left hand, and had no sooner got back to England than he refused to allow a groom to accompany him as usual in his rides, because, he said, he must learn to open the gates for himself. He was fond of sport, carried a double-barrelled gun, and was such an excellent pheasant shot that his performances excited admiration even in the covers of Norfolk. His aim at a partridge was not so deadly, but he fully rivalled the average of sportsmen.

Lord Eldon was clumsy and inefficient in all field sports, and did not hesitate to laugh at his own deficiencies with respect to the accomplishment most in vogue with the country gentlemen of his time. This good-humour, writes Mr. Jeaffreson, "was all the more creditable as he enjoyed playing the part of a rural Squire, and took great, though bootless pains to qualify himself with skill, as well as license, to kill the game which he preserved on his estate at considerable cost. As long as he could relish bodily exercise he carried a gun, but he never ventured



to ride with hounds after reaching years of sound discretion.”\*

Lord Cardigan, who, after many long years of military life, gained his first reward—for, as Mr. Whyte Melville says, in the *reconnaissance* of the Dobrudscha, at Bulganak, before Sebastopol, and in the famous onset of Balaclava, “his passion for warfare must have been gratified, his thirst for fame must surely have been quenched”—was one of the best sportsmen that ever went into a field. He followed the chase unremittingly through life, and, up to three score years and ten, could have sailed away, on a good horse, from nineteen out of every twenty men who got a start with him from a covert-side. His doings in the hunting-field are still talked of in Leicestershire, many anecdotes being told of him.

On one occasion he and his relative, Mr. Wilbraham Tollemache, interchanged some good-humoured *badinage* as to who should go best in a possible run. The Commoner was as brilliant a rider as the Peer. The trial came off, and Mr. Whyte Melville relates how he “saw him ride a tired horse into the Welland to swim across after the hounds, and narrowly escape drowning, no improbable result for a man encumbered with boots and breeches, who, if naked, would hardly have been safe out of his depth; and the ‘Mind,

\* “A Book about Lawyers,” i., 154.



Wilbraham, I was in first,' is still quoted by the yeomen and farmers on the banks of the Wreake." The end of this great soldier and sportsman was painful; for, riding out "on the old saddle-tree that had borne him of yore," to visit a family in their bereavement, his horse reared and fell, crushing him beneath its weight. He never spoke again—an accident which reminds us of that which happened to other eminent men. It may be remembered, too, how the late Earl of Scarborough met with a mishap in the hunting-field which brought on a spinal affection, and prevented his further indulging in field sports.

So long as the Marquis of Clanricarde could go to the meet, it was immaterial to him what he rode. Passing through Dublin one day, he called on a well-known friend of every Irish sportsman—

"Hi," he said, "can you let me have a horse to ride with to the Kildare Hounds?"

"I am very sorry, my lord, I have nothing to offer you just at present," was the reply.

"What! not a horse in your stable?"

"Nothing, my lord, but a one-eyed horse I bought from a miller to carry a whip. I hear he has been hunted, but I know nothing about him, and he is in moderate trim."

"Never mind; send him on. I will be at the meet."



Indeed, according to *Baily's Magazine* (July, 1866), on one day he would appear on a plain, hunting-like horse, on the next on a weedy thoroughbred, on the next on an ancient far-advanced in his teens, or very groggy on his legs, and perhaps a couple of awkward horses to ride completed the stud.

Among the many amusing anecdotes of his hunting days, Grantley Berkeley tells us\* how the Gunters, the renowned pastry cooks of Berkeley Square, were frequently out with his hounds, subscribing to the hunt.

On one occasion Lord Alvanley remarked to Mr. Gunter—

“That’s a fine horse you are on.”

“Yes, he is, my lord,” replied Gunter; “but he is so hot I can’t hold him.”

“Why the devil don’t you ice him, then?” rejoined his lordship.

But Gunter did not relish the suggestion. At another time Lord Alvanley was out hunting with Grantley Berkeley when the stag took an unfortunate line by Hounslow, Twickenham, and Teddington, and got into the Thames. The whole run, or nearly all of it, had been through nursery and market gardens, and the stag was so mobbed that he refused to leave the river.

\* “My Life and Recollections,” i., 297.



Alvanley was over—went on early to town after seeing the sport; and, when in the bay window at White's, some of his friends asked him—

“What sport?”

“Oh!” he replied, “the mutton and asparagus beds were devilish heavy—up to our hocks in glass all day; and all Berkeley wanted was a landing-net to get his deer out of the water.”

In his “Autobiography,” Anthony Trollope gives a lively and vivid picture of one of his hunting excursions. He had just returned, in December, 1872, from his voyage to Australia (where he had experienced some hunting of a novel kind), and though settled in London, was determined not to lose wholly his favourite exercise, which, by many of our hard-worked men, has been followed as much for health's sake as for a relaxation. “I got home in December, 1872,” he writes, “and, in spite of any resolution made to the contrary, my mind was full of hunting as I came back. No real resolutions had, in truth, been made, for out of a stud of four horses I kept three, two of which were absolutely idle through the two summers and winters of my absence. Immediately, on my arrival, I bought another, and settled myself down to hunting from London three days a week. At first I went back to Essex, my old county, but finding that to be



inconvenient, I took my offices to Leighton Buzzard, and became one of that numerous herd of sportsmen who rode with the 'Baron' and Mr. Selby Lowndes.

"During the winters of 1873, 1874, and 1875 I had my horses back in Essex, and went on with my hunting, always trying to resolve that I would give it up. But still I bought fresh horses, and as I did not give it up, I hunted more than ever. Three times a week the cab has been at my door in London very punctually, and not unfrequently before seven in the morning. In order to secure this attendance the man has always been invited to have his breakfast in the hall. I have gone to the Great Eastern Railway, ah! so often with fear that frost would make all my exertions useless, and so often, too, with that result. And then, from one station or another station, have travelled on wheels at least a dozen miles. After the day's sport the same toil has been necessary to bring me home to dinner at eight. This has been work for a young man and a rich man, but I have done it as an old man and comparatively a poor man."

Like Trollope, another familiar character who was equally genuine in all love of sport was Charles Kingsley. In one of his shorter pieces, "My Winter Garden," he gives a highly-pleasing



account of his encounter with a hunted fox as he was riding through the fir-woods round about Eversley. "And now appear, dim at first, but brightening, and nearing fast, many a right good fellow, and many a right good horse. I know three out of four of them, their private histories, and the private histories of their horses, and could tell you many a good story of them. That huntsman I have known for fifteen years, and sat many an hour beside his father's death-bed. I am godfather to that whip's child. I have seen the servants of the Hunt, as I have the hounds, grow up round me for two generations, and I feel for them as old friends, and like to look into their brave, honest, weather-beaten, faces. That red-coat there, I knew him when he was a school-boy, and now he is a captain in the Guards, and won his Victoria Cross at Inkerman; that bright green coat is the best farmer, as well as the hardest rider, for many a mile round; one who plays as he works, with all his might, and might have been a *beau sabreur*, a colonel of dragoons. So might that black-coat, who now brews new good beer, and stands up for the poor at the board of guardians, rides like the green-coat as well as he works. That other black-coat is a county banker, but he knows more of the fox than the fox knows of himself, and where the



hounds are there will be this day. That red-coat has hunted kangaroo in Australia; that one, as clever and good as he is brave and simple, has stood by Napier's side in many an Indian fight; that one won his Victoria at Delhi, and was cut up at Lucknow with more than twenty wounds; that one, has—but what matter to you what each man is? Enough that each can tell one a good story, welcome one cheerfully, and give one out here, in the wild forest, the wholesome feeling of being at home among friends.”

Then there was Whyte Melville, whose love of a horse, or hound, peeps out in many of his stories. He was a good judge of a young horse, and an admirer of all kinds of country sport, having, undoubtedly, a greater sympathy for the field than the turf. But that he understood all the details of sport is evident from even a cursory perusal of some of his best-known works. Indeed, as a writer has remarked, “he knows the classes and the subjects intimately about whom and which he writes. He knows a helper, a tout, a low gamester, grooms, huntsmen, trainers,” and, in short, gives a thorough, and true, delineation of the subject he introduces. His “Market Harborough” is, for instance, full of life, and there is perhaps nothing in sporting literature so good. Throughout it bears the impress of the author's



finished method of dealing with scenes and characters with which he was well familiar, and would, probably, never have been written had he not been at heart a true sportsman.

In his palmy days Assheton Smith would ride two-and-thirty miles to cover and back again at night, and used to boast that in his time he had cut off 1,500 brushes with his own pocket-knife. No wonder that a field of upwards of two thousand mounted men, "one-third in pink," turned out on one great occasion to meet him. Men of his stamp are not found every day, and it may safely be said that very many generations will have passed away, before his memory is forgotten in any shire wherein hunting is still one of the attractions of country life. As a master of hounds, he was noted for his pluck and bull-dog courage, which caused him one day to remark in the field, "There was no fence a man could not get over without a fall." In riding to hounds, too, he possessed the rare qualification of knowing how to fall, always contriving to clear his horse's neck, and never to let him go. It is related that, on one occasion, when his famous Screwdriver capsized him into a furze bush, and was kicking and plunging in a circle round him, and a well-meaning farmer exclaimed to him, "Let go the bridle, or he will be the death of



you," he replied, "He shall kick my brains out first." Nothing was so low in his opinion as running about after a fall, saying, "Catch my horse! Pray catch my horse!"

To quote a further anecdote of his wonderful feats of horsemanship, it appears that, when in Lincolnshire, the hounds one day "came to a cut, or navigable canal, called the Fosdyke, over which there were two bridges, one a bridle bridge, the other used for carts, running parallel to each other at several yards' distance. At one end of these bridges there is usually a high gate leading into the field adjoining the canal, and along each side of them is a low rail, to protect persons going over. Smith rode along one of these bridges, and found the gate at the end locked, whereas he saw the gate open at the end of the parallel bridge. He immediately put his horse at the rails, and jumped across and over the opposite rails on to the other bridge, to the immense surprise and gratification of all who witnessed the feat."

But the day came when even this most enthusiastic and accomplished hunter must bid farewell to the sport he had loved so well, and the parting scene with his hounds will show how attached he was to them to the last. To give the words of "The Druid," "the covert side knew him no more after October, 1857, when he just cantered up



to Willbury on his chestnut hack, Blemish, to see his hounds draw. Carter had orders to bring the choicest of his 1858 entries, and he and Will Bryce arrived at the usual rendezvous with five couple of bitches by the Fitzwilliam, Hardwicke, and Hermit. He looked at them for a short time and exclaimed, 'Well, they are as beautiful as they can be!' He then bade both his men good-bye, and they saw him in the field no more."

But, in speaking of Assheton Smith, we may fitly allude to the famous George Carter, who, it may be remembered, had but one wish—that he might be laid by his master, with two hunters, and a "fine couple of his honour's hounds, all ready to start again together in the next world"\*—a sentiment for which, it has been suggested, the red man of the plains would have hailed him with delight as a friend and a brother.

William Wentworth, Earl Fitzwilliam, was much attached to the sports of the field, and, at all times, evinced a scrupulous anxiety to do no injury to the farmer whilst pursuing his favourite pastime. On one occasion he presented a bank-note for one hundred pounds to one of his tenants, whose young wheat had been apparently injured by his hounds and their followers. But, some time afterwards, his tenant called upon him to tell him that as

\* *Quart. Review*, clviii., 403; *Baily's Magazine*, 1860, 21-5.



the ground which had been trodden by the horses, and dogs, would evidently yield a better crop than his other land, he wished to return the money. The Earl, however, refused to accept it, and insisted on giving the farmer another note of a similar amount as a reward for his honesty.

Grantley Berkeley\* tells an amusing story of the Duke of St. Albans' arrangement for saving himself trouble when shooting:—"We were assembled in the vestibule of my mother's old house, when the Duke's servant came in, bearing in his hand a silver waiter, on which was narrowly folded up a black silk handkerchief. We at first regarded this as an additional neckcloth; but when, with the utmost gravity, and in the midst of a dead silence, his Grace took it and solemnly proceeded to bind it round his head so as to tie up the left eye, I could hold my peace no longer.

" 'What on earth are you doing?' I asked.

" 'Why,' he replied, without relaxing a muscle of his countenance, 'I hear you have a lot of game, so I am binding my eye to avoid the trouble of having to shut it so often when I fire.' "

But the roar of laughter, into which all present exploded, induced the Duke to return the bandage to his servant.

Lord Grantley's mode of shooting partridges

\* "My Life and Recollections," i., 227-8.



was remarkable. He would enter the field, and stationing himself under the first tree, umbrella as well as gun in hand, in case there should be no shelter from the sun or rain, there he kept his place till his pointers had beaten the ground. If there was game he went up to the point; if not, he proceeded to the next field, and did the same thing.\*

Although not possessed of a remarkably strong physique, John Leech, by reason of his nervous and energetic temperament, could undergo a great deal of fatigue. Oftentimes he would follow the hounds, his presence at the "Pytchley" being a recognized thing. He delighted, also, in a hebdomadal visit to the Puckeridge. On the Friday evening he was in the habit of leaving Brunswick Square, where he resided for many years in happiness and prosperity, for the "White Horse" at Baldock. He was usually accompanied by a couple of friends, or brother artists, who, like himself, considered a day's fox-hunting a real holiday. The modest hotel, to which they resorted, was famous for nothing but the excellent simplicity of its fare, and a very superior bottle of old port wine on state occasions. Of late years Leech always rode a little chestnut horse, belonging to the landlord, although he had one of his own always standing

\* "Grantley Berkeley's Life and Recollections," i., 229.



there, and which he sent out for the pleasure of old acquaintance sake, and to see him go.

But, curious to say, within a few days of his death the poor old inn, the horse, the house, and the sign in which he so much delighted were all sold up—a melancholy ending to the many pleasant memories connected with this favourite spot. It is said of him\* that, notwithstanding his intimate knowledge of every detail of the huntsman's dress, even to the number of buttons on his coat, he invariably presented, in the hunting-field, an incongruous appearance with regard to his outfit. Either he would wear the wrong kind of boots, or would dispense with some article which would be considered an unpardonable omission on the part of an enthusiast. His want of exactness in his attire is accounted for by his friends, writes Mr Kitton, "as an instance of his retiring disposition and unwillingness for prominence as a huntsman, well-knowing his deficiencies in rough riding, which resulted from nervousness. His sensitiveness to criticism thus prevented him from incurring it."

In his love of country life and field sports, Lord Mayo found an enviable resource against the vexations of a public career. It was his country tastes as a sportsman which, as Chief Secretary for Ireland, helped, we are told, "to keep his

\* "Biographical Sketch of John Leech," 1884, 73-4.



temper sweet, and his nature wholesome, at a time when he began to feel somewhat keenly the difference between what he had hoped to do for Ireland and what he would be practically permitted to accomplish." It was as a huntsman that he attained real eminence—a feature of sporting life which afterwards contributed to his popularity and public usefulness in India.

He was not, too, content with enjoying hunting; he studied it. He actually familiarized himself with the country which he hunted, as a general would study a district which he had to hold or to invade. Although, as Master of the Kildare Hounds, he had a good deal against him, in his public capacity as a politician, with the farmers and others, yet, writes one of his brother sportsmen, "his innate goodness of heart, his thorough love of Ireland and Irishmen, and his wondrous enthusiasm for sport, soon made him loved by all who knew him. There are many farmers who have not hunted since his time; and he made many a man hunt who never thought of it before. He was never once in a field without knowing it ever afterwards, and how to get out of it. He remembered every fence in the country; and one day having lost his watch in a run, he next day walked over the ground, part of which he had passed alone, and found it."



From the same source we learn how during his last season, when he had a huntsman who fell ill, he hunted the hounds himself for a short time, and killed his fox on a bad scenting day in March, with a cold easterly wind, having seen the fox at least fourteen Irish miles. He never missed a day during the cub-hunting, and always began at daybreak, and often before, rarely returning, if he could help it, until he had killed a fox. It is related how, on one occasion when the hunting party were bolting a fox at Martin's Town, a wasp's nest was disturbed. All ran but Lord Mayo, who quietly stood until the fox bolted, when he had a good gallop and killed it. Nevertheless, he was much stung. Many a time, also, he went to the meet when the country was deep with snow and hard frost; but, if it was thawing, he always hunted, even with no one out.

Again, as Viceroy of India, one secret of his success was the genuine pleasure which he took in the people's sports. "Notwithstanding I am governing two hundred millions of people," he wrote to a friend, "I occasionally get an hour or two for a gallop after a pig. It is the only sport in the country which is congenial to the feelings of an old fox-hunter, and it is real business. You have to ride hard over very rough ground,



or some young civilian or subaltern will not give you a chance of a first spear. There is no favour shown, and the Bengal pig-sticker would as soon ride over the Viceroy as an Oxford boy over the Speaker of the House of Commons, or the Bishop of Winchester."

Of the numerous interesting entries in his diary relative to Indian sport may be quoted the following sketch of April tiger-shooting in Northern India:—

"The country being very dry, the tigers are all found close to the water. The water is generally bordered on each side with a margin of reeds, varying from fifteen to three hundred yards in width; and as the streams wind a good deal, the beating of these watercourses is a very slow process—every thick bunch of reeds has to be carefully searched by the pad-elephants, lest a tiger should be left behind. The ground is often very swampy, and the elephants have considerable difficulty in getting through what the natives call *fusin*—simply a soft, deep, and stinking mud. To-day's bag: One tiger, 2 tigresses, 17 para, 2 chital (leopard), 5 hares, 4 black and 1 swamp partridge, 2 pig, 1 pea-fowl; total, 35."\* Lord Mayo was, in truth, a thorough sportsman, and the *Oriental Sporting Magazine* bears witness

\* "Life of the Earl of Mayo," W. W. Hunter, i., 97-100.



to the affection and respect with which he was held by sportsmen in the East.

Lord Fitzhardinge, better known as Sir Maurice Berkeley, the head of one of the oldest-established packs in the country, was, like his predecessors, a devoted champion of the hunting-field. In addition to being a capital rider, he was a thoroughly practical man as a sportsman, and in breeding hounds entertained the same views as the previous earl, who did not fancy any dog-hound above twenty-three inches, and cared more about the work they got through than their symmetry. "I don't care for all their looks," he was wont to say; "huntsmen forget to breed hounds for their noses—they're all for looks. Give me the pack that will kill foxes."

In the hunting-field Thomas Egerton, Earl of Wilton, was long conspicuous, his stud combining the cream of English hunters. He was a persistent sportsman, and was familiar with every field and fence in Leicestershire.

Throughout Yorkshire the name of Sir Tatton Sykes was honoured and revered; for, leading a quiet and simple life, he was everybody's friend who needed help, and it is said that, from his hospitable door, no one ever went away hungry or thirsty. As a lover of the county, he took the utmost interest and delight in all sorts of sports;



and—a capital rider—he hunted his own fox-hounds for years. Of the many amusing stories told of him, it appears that a certain smart gentleman, after hallooing to the hounds, and receiving no attention, exclaimed within earshot of Sir Tatton, who was galloping on the other side of the hedge, “I would not give a —— for hounds that will not come to halloa,” to which the calm reply came, “My hounds never attend to what silly people say.”

Although tender-hearted and thoroughly good, yet he always resented a liberty in any form, and would not brook an insult. It happened, for example, that soon after his marriage, an acquaintance who had also taken a similar step, met him out with the hounds, and said: “Well, Sir Tatton, I observe that you have not improved your dress much in consequence of your marriage.”

“No, Mr. S—,” was the ready reply, “no more than you have your manners.”

John Metcalf, the famous road-maker, although blind, was a good huntsman, and to follow the hounds was one of the greatest pleasures of his life. He was as bold a rider as ever took the field, and was apparently regardless of danger. Many hunting adventures are related of him, which, considering his blindness, are almost incredible.



Then, lastly, there was John Russell, the well-known "hunting parson," than whom a better or more consummate sportsman never lived. In 1833 he was appointed perpetual curate of Swymbridge and Landkey, where he remained to the end of his life. Soon after his appointment to the bishopric of Exeter, Henry Philpotts, much troubled by the number of hunting parsons, called John Russell up to answer certain charges brought against him, and to remonstrate with him on the subject of keeping hounds. The charges were found to be utterly unfounded, Russell refused to give up his hounds, and there the matter ended. Like all our men of mark, he was humble, and when an application was made for details about his life, he wrote thus:—

"Dennington, June 17th, 1870.

"What are you driving at? Are you writing my life? You won't get anyone to read it!—for I am getting into the sere and yellow leaf, and shall soon be forgotten. Few, very few, alas! of my old companions of the chase are left to greet me, as of yore, at the coverside; though, thank God, I am still welcomed wherever I go, and that, too, by those who look in vain for the dear old horn and couples. I wish you had seen my last run, just before Christmas, with ten couple of hounds,



over Exmoor, twenty miles on the map, eighteen as the crow flies, *at least*. The natives *say more*. Not a check, and only one small fence, over the best ground in the forest. We, a chosen few, were never one hundred yards from them."

Towards the close of his life he paid many a pleasant visit to the Prince and Princess of Wales at Sandringham, and a delightful account of these visits will be found in his "Memoirs of Out-door Life,"\* wherein, too, are given many amusing anecdotes of his hunting adventures and experiences. Thus, in 1877, he writes to a brother sportsman: "Last Thursday Lord Portsmouth's hounds met at Castle Hill; and, while they were running, I suffered such agony in my teeth that I requested a medical gentleman present to rid me of the chief offender. 'In lieu of a better instrument, a bit of whipcord,' he said, would serve the purpose; and verily, with that hempen appliance, out he lugged the supposed culprit; but—

‘Eheu, quid volui misero mihi!’

It proved to be a valuable friend—a tooth as sound as the day it was ‘dropped.’ You’ll pity me, I know, when I say this is not the first time I have suffered a similar loss."

\* By the author of "Dartmoor Days."



Again, writing to a young lady on the 6th March of the same year, he says: "Alas! my head and neck are now garnished with all the colours of the rainbow. The good old horse I have so long ridden, while galloping over a grass field, fell on his head, and pitched me I don't know where—but certainly on my head, for my hat was 'britted in,' and I saw more stars in the firmament than ever was a-put there. Ask your old daddy to explain that to you."

His hunting career was full of incidents of this kind, one further illustration of which we subjoin:—

One market day at Barnstaple, Will Chapple, the parish clerk of Swymbridge, entered the shop, and while his business was being attended to, the grocer thus interrogated him:—

"Well, Mr. Chapple, and have 'ee got a coorate yet for Swymbridge?"

"Not yet, 'sir, master's nation particler; 't isn't this man, nor 't isn't that as'll suit un; but here's his advertisement" (pulling out a copy of the *North Devon Journal*), "so I reckon he'll soon get one now —

" 'Wanted, a curate for Swymbridge; must be a gentleman of moderate and orthodox views.' "

"Orthodox! Mr. Chapple; what doth he mean by that?" inquired the grocer.

"Well," said the clerk, in some perplexity, "I



can't exactly say ; but I reckon 'tis a man as can *ride* pretty well."

Principal Shairp always took an interest in hunting, and a characteristic story is told of him. When he first went up to Oxford he did not know anyone ; and, feeling lonely, determined to indulge in a day's hunting. Accordingly he went to the best livery stables and demanded a horse. The proprietor was a knowing man, and, after a little conversation, concluded that Shairp was a safe man, and gave him a first-rate mount.

There were many "men" out that day, and the run was a severe one—and, as it happened, every man was left behind except Shairp and the master of the hounds—a young man very well known and much admired among the sporting members of the University. The two got talking, and Shairp proposed that, being near Oxford, they should return and dine in college. This was done, and great was the astonishment of Balliol to see the young Scotch freshman walk into the hall, accompanied by the dashing M.F.H., who was, at least to the sporting ones, the object of so much admiration. Henceforth Shairp found himself introduced to as much of the college society as he desired.\*

Sir Francis Chantrey was especially fond of

\* "Principal Shairp and his Friends": William Knight, 147.



shooting, although Mr. Holland suspects his proficiency with the gun has been overrated. The brace of woodcocks which he killed by a single shot at Holkham, where a marble tablet bearing a representation of the two dead birds from his gifted hand has long been viewed with interest, has often been celebrated.\* There can be no doubt, too, that, like angling, he engaged in this recreation for the sake of bodily health and mental quietude, finding it a pleasant and refreshing antidote to his busy life. It was about the year 1840 that he paid his last visit to his old friend, John Read, who was then residing at Derwent Hall, with the intention of having some grouse shooting on "the moors." But, alas! eager as he was in the pursuit of the birds, he soon found that he could no longer keep up with his dog among the heather. Accordingly he consented to mount a tractable pony, observing to his host, "you have taught me to believe that *I am a more infirm man than I thought myself to be.*"

A well-known and amusing story is told of Sheridan, who was no sportsman. Having gone out on a shooting excursion, everything flew before him and his gun, despite his efforts to secure something for his bag. On his return home with an empty bag he saw a man, apparently

\* "Memorials of Sir Francis Chantrey," 1851, 320-1.



a farmer, looking over a gate at a flock of ducks in a pool.

“What will you take,” said Sheridan, “for a shot at these ducks?”

The man looked at him with astonishment.

“Will half-a-crown do?”

The man nodded, and Sheridan gave him the half-crown, taking his shot at the ducks. About half-a-dozen fell dead. As he was preparing to bag them he said to the man —

“I think, on the whole, I have got a good bargain of you.”

“Why,” said the man, “they’re none o’ mine!”

On settling in the country Sydney Smith made up his mind never to shoot, and that for three reasons: “First,” he says, “because I found, on trying at Lord Grey’s, that the birds seemed to consider the muzzle of my gun as their safest position; secondly, because I never could help shutting my eyes when I fired my gun, so was not likely to improve; and, thirdly, because, if you do shoot, the Squire and the poacher both consider you as their natural enemy, and I thought it more clerical to be at peace with both.”

The late Lord Malmesbury kept a journal of his sporting life, even to the quantity of powder



and shot he used, the game he killed each day, the time he was out, the distance he walked, and the weather. It appears that the grand total killed by him on Heron Court Manors—famous for the number and variety of its game and wild fowl—from 1798 to 1840, was 38,475. Lord Plunket was another keen sportsman, and always enjoying excellent health, spent most of his leisure in out-of-door exercises. In his youth he suffered many hardships and privations, and throughout his public life had few opportunities for relaxation ; yet until he had passed his “ three score years and ten ” it may be said that he never had a day’s illness.

A curious adventure of Lord Wemyss with a sporting blacksmith in Roxburgshire, who was famed in his locality for successful wild-goose stalking, is told by Grantley Berkeley. Anxious to gratify his curiosity, his lordship paid the blacksmith a visit, and asked him, among other things, how he charged his gun.

Thereupon the blacksmith, abandoning his bellows, produced an old rusty bell-muzzled gun, six feet long in the barrel, into which he poured a handful of powder, ramming it down with a thick wad of brown paper, “ hitting it as hard as if it were a red-hot nail.” This done, he dived into a promiscuous heap of ashes, fragments of



old iron, and heads of nails, and, having dropped these in upon the powder and rammed them in with the wad of brown paper, the smith felt a match for any flock of geese.

“Come on, my lord,” he then cried. “There’s a flock of geese on the wilds, and I’ll show you how I deals with ’em.”

Parting company, Lord Wemyss took the higher ground to watch the sequel, while the smith, crawling within an easy distance of the geese, composed himself for a shot when about thirty yards off. After aiming for about ten minutes, an enormous report resounded through the air, when “a volume of dense smoke arose simultaneously with the confused geese, whose cacklings were of the most terrific kind, while one or two of the flock were left fluttering on the ground.”

Fearing fatal consequences, and that the gun had burst, Lord Wemyss hastened to the spot. The smith was insensible, but soon consciousness returned, and, crawling up to his gun, and eyeing it, with intense satisfaction, he said —

“Wal, my lord, noo doubt she’s pratty full of destruction to the fowl, but she’s used me wal this time ; it mostly takes twenty minutes gude aforde I comes to myself after letting her off—but I *always gets my guse.*”

Horatio Ross, christened Horatio after Lord



Nelson, who was his godfather, was of unrivalled skill in shooting. In England he was matched against all comers as a game shot, and in Scotland was known *par excellence* as the deer stalker! One cause of his success was his physical strength, and it is related that, in a match he shot with Colonel Anson at partridges in Norfolk, when the latter retired from sheer exhaustion, he was so fresh that he challenged any of the bystanders to walk with him to London, a distance of seventy miles. It may be added, too, that he was the best pistol shot in Europe; and "at a period when most trivial cases often led to hostile and fatal meetings, he so carefully avoided either saying or doing anything to wound the feelings of others, that he never had a serious quarrel with anyone."\*

For sport, W. E. Forster entertained something like a feeling of abhorrence. "From his mother as a boy," writes Mr. Wemyss Reid, "he had learned to detest anything in the nature of cruelty to dumb animals. As he grew older this feeling seemed to grow stronger. Nothing appeared to rouse him to more intense indignation than any persecution of the animal creation. It followed that he refrained scrupulously from all field sports. He never hunted, he never shot,

\* *Baily's Mag.*, 1869, 2.



save as a marksman in a volunteer competition. Indeed, amusing stories are told of his ignorance of the way in which a man ought to handle a gun."

In private life Lord Eversley was extremely popular, one reason being that he was a great sportsman. It is said that he and Sir Robert Peel were rival shots, and two of the best game shots in England. When they shot together, as they often did at Stathfieldsaye, they were generally the two favourites, on one, or other, of whom the keepers used to lay their money. In cover-shooting Lord Eversley preferred walking with the beaters; Sir Robert, who disliked being rumped, taking the outside.

A day's partridge or pheasant shooting gave Sir Richard Bethel, afterwards Lord Westbury, keen delight. The coverts at Hackwood were kept carefully stocked with pheasants, and the shooting parties were made the occasion of filling the house with visitors. Though careful himself in handling a gun, he sometimes rashly courted danger, for he delighted to bring down from London, to stay a day or two at Hackwood, "some solemn old bankruptcy official," and made the unhappy man, who hardly knew one end of a gun from the other, join in one of the bigger shoots, telling him to stand near him, and only to fire at



rabbits. He would discuss legal arrangements with him between the beats, or while the game was being driven up ; the guest, in a black coat and tall hat, and with a pair of Sir Richard's old gaiters on, looking utterly miserable between his fear of the gun in his hands and the lectures he was getting from his host, and no doubt wishing himself a hundred times safe back in his office. As the hares and rabbits began to dash up to him, and the guns, advancing with the beaters, were blazing away all round, he might be seen poking his gun at one rabbit after another, but too dazed or alarmed to shoot, while Sir Richard was yelling at him, 'Shoot, Mr. —; shoot! Why on earth don't you fire?' till the rest of the party could hardly hit anything for laughing, and took care to give the novice a wide berth for the rest of the day."\*

Again, we are told how "in the summer mornings Sir Richard Bethel would open the windows overlooking the lawn, and place a loaded twenty-bore gun near it. As the mist yielded to the sun's rays, a stray rabbit was often seen feeding, or leisurely returning to its burrow. Sir Richard, presenting a peculiar, and comical, aspect in his scarlet dressing-gown and white night-cap, with a red tassel, walked slowly up and down with a very solemn face and an eye on the lawn.

\* "Life of Lord Westbury," i., 243-44.



Presently a belated rabbit appeared, whereupon, his expression changing to one of intense excitement, down went the brief or book, and seizing the gun he would shoot at the rabbit from the window. Then exclaiming, 'I've got him!' or 'I missed him!' as the case might be, he resumed his dictation as if nothing had happened."\*

Among further anecdotes, we are told† how a Greek nobleman, Count M—, an old friend of his, used to shoot sometimes at Hackwood. The Count, "besides being a very bad shot, was wont to fire in a wild and dangerous manner, and Lord Westbury delighted in 'wiping his eye!' One day the Count, after missing every shot he had, severely peppered one of the dogs, and then twice claimed for himself birds which had dropped to his host's gun. He capped this performance a few minutes later by nearly bagging the whole line of shooters, keepers, and beaters in a turnip field, his previous misdeeds, and the higgings he got for them, having made him completely lose his head. This was too much for Lord Westbury, who at once ordered a keeper to take his gun and cartridges, and sent the offending sportsman home to the ladies, to the great amusement and relief of the rest of the party."

\* "Life of Lord Westbury," i., 284.

† *Ibid.*, ii., 47.



Tom Hood loved a joke. When living at Wanstead, two or three friends came down for a day's shooting, and, as they often did in the evening, they rowed out into the middle of the little lake in an old punt. On this occasion, writes his daughter, "they were full of spirits, and had played off one or two practical jokes on their host, till on getting out of the boat, leaving him last, one of them gave it a push, and out went my father into the water. Fortunately, it was the landing place, and the water was not deep, but he was wet through. It was playing with edged tools to venture on such tricks with him, and he quietly determined to turn the tables. Presently he began to complain of cramp and stitches, and at last went indoors.

"His friends' getting rather ashamed of their rough fun, persuaded him to go to bed, which he immediately did. His groans, and complaints, increased so alarmingly that they were almost at their wits' ends what to do. My mother had received a quiet hint, and was therefore not alarmed, though much amused at the terrified efforts, and prescriptions, of the repentant jokers. There was no doctor to be had for miles, and all sorts of queer remedies were suggested and administered, my father shaking with laughing, while they supposed he had got ague or fever. One rushed



up with a tea-kettle of boiling-water hanging on his arm, another tottered under a tin bath, and a third brought the mustard. My father at length, as well as he could speak, gave out in a sepulchral voice that he was dying, and detailed some most absurd directions for his will, which they were all too frightened to see the fun of. At last he could stand it no longer, and after hearing the penitent offenders beg him to forgive them for their unfortunate joke, and beseech him to believe in their remorse, he burst into a perfect shout of laughing, which they thought at first was delirious frenzy, but which ultimately betrayed the joke."

Anecdotes of this kind, whilst enlivening the memories of our field sports, cannot fail to attract interest among those who have never perhaps been at a "meet," much less seen a pheasant knocked down.



## CHAPTER V.

### THE TURF.

C. Cavendish Greville—Duke of Portland—Lord Chesterfield—Duke of Kingston—Marquis of Tavistock—Earl of Zetland—Charles James Fox—Lord Barrymore—Duke of Richmond—Marquis of Queensberry—Marquis of Westminster—Duke of Bridgewater—Lord Foley—General Peel—Earl of Exeter—Earl of Clermont—Lord Stradbroke—Duke of Bedford—Sir C. Bunbury—Earl Derby—Lord Palmerston—Lord George Bentinck—Marquis of Hastings—Admiral Rous—Lord Glasgow—Lord Ailesbury—Marquis of Anglesea—Earl of Strafford—General Anson—Earl Wilton—Lord St. Vincent—C. Mathews—Lord Jersey—George Payne—Lord Calthorpe—Lord Mayo—Baron Martin—Lord Westbury—John Metcalf.

THE English turf, which has been the free battleground for the best horses in the world, will, it is to be hoped, ever be as popular in the future as it has proved in the past. Patronized by many of our ablest men, including statesmen, Cabinet Ministers, and even Prime Ministers, it has maintained its coveted position of heading



the sports of our country, of which every Englishman may be justly proud. The high standing, too, and unimpeachable character of so many of our sport-loving celebrities have in years gone by unquestionably elevated in a marked degree the dignity of the turf, however much abuses, in other quarters, may have tended to discourage it in the eyes of the public. As the *Quarterly Review*\* has remarked, "It may seem strange, but it is true, that the perusal of the *Racing Calendar* has produced as good political stuff as has resulted from the composition of theological pamphlets," and the statesmen who have frequented the race-course "have served their country as well as if their appearance had been expected at the lectern rather than on the stewards' stand." In truth, since the Marquis of Rockingham won the first St. Leger until the present day, when many of our leading statesmen recruit their energies, after their arduous Parliamentary labours, in the excitement of the race, it would be difficult to find a longer list of eminent men who have adopted any one special diversion for their recreation. Royalty, also, has equally patronized the turf, and it has long become a household theme how strong the passion was in George IV., for, when he lay in

\* 1861, p. 462.



his last illness, full information was sent him, at his express desire, to inform him of the races at Ascot Heath. Although home-bound, he could not rest without being well posted in all that was going on in the racing world he loved so dearly.

Charles Cavendish Greville, whose interesting memoirs have thrown so much light on the state of political parties in the last two preceding reigns, held a prominent position in the sporting world, having been one of the oldest members of the Jockey Club. When barely fifteen years of age he saw his first Derby in 1809, when the Duke of Grafton's Pope won, beating five others. As a young man he was selected to manage the racing establishment of the Duke of York, and he managed so well that in his second year he won the Derby for him with Moses. On the retirement of the Duke of York his stud came to the hammer, and Greville proffered assistance to his uncle, the Duke of Portland. Afterwards he became confederate with Lord Chesterfield, and ultimately with his cousin, Lord George Bentinck, who, owing to his father's hostility to racing, was unable to run horses in his own name. Two of Greville's most successful horses were Mango and Alarm, the latter winning the Ascot Cup and the Orange Cup at Goodwood. But without going further into the racing history of this remarkable



man, there can be no doubt that he lent a lustre to the English turf, and, it may be added, that in his private life his influence was equally felt, for no man ever sought his advice and assistance in vain.

Possessed of a fortune of one hundred thousand pounds with an income of fifty thousand a year, Lord Chesterfield was able to gratify his love for a thoroughbred horse, and, as already noticed, he entered into a confederacy with Mr. Greville. Horse-racing with him was an enthusiastic pleasure, and it is related that when he hastened out from the enclosure to meet Don John coming in to weigh, after he had won the St. Leger, in the excitement of the moment he ran against the time-keeper and knocked him down. When this worthy and important personage resented this unceremonious treatment, the jubilant Lord Chesterfield exclaimed —

“ Oh, hang the time ! I’ve won the St. Leger ! ”

The Duke of Kingston was a great patron of the turf previous to his taking to farming, and had more than thirty horses in training at one time. But he was far from successful, and his severe losses were, no doubt, his chief inducement in retiring from the turf.

On succeeding to the dukedom, the Marquis of Tavistock made racing his sole recreation, with



the idea that it was incumbent on him as a sportsman to promote the first of our national sports by such means as were at his disposal, but against gambling of any kind he always strongly set his face. A harmless wager with a friend upon a match he never objected to, but he had an intense dislike to the trickery, and heavy betting, so frequently found on the race-course. By discountenancing one of the greatest evils of the turf, he helped to confer a dignity upon it which all true lovers of sport would like to see it possess.

The second Earl of Zetland, although an earnest politician, was a zealous patron of the turf, his fame in the racing world having dated from the purchase of Voltigeur, at the reserved price of three hundred and fifty pounds, the training of which was committed to Robert Hill, an old Yorkshire groom, who soon fell in love with him. In the annals of the turf, few more exciting scenes have been witnessed than when Voltigeur won the Doncaster Cup, value 300 sovs., against Lord Eglington's Flying Dutchman, which had already achieved considerable success. The event, to use the language of the turf, proved to be "a floorer" for the layers of odds, and when Robert Hill, in an agony of delight, shouted at the top of his voice, "Volti's got him! Volti's got him!" the eager lookers on caught up the cry, and



Voltigeur, amid a scene of tumult and enthusiasm, was declared to be one of the best horses of the century.

With Charles James Fox's deep interest in racing most readers are familiar. Of the many allusions to his deep love of the turf may be quoted the following passage from Walpole's "Recollections," which shows that he was almost a child in his keen excitement:—"When he had a horse in a race, Mr. Fox was all eagerness and anxiety. He always placed himself where the animal was to make his final effort, or the race was to be most strongly contested. From this spot he eyed the horses advancing with a most immovable look; he breathed quicker as they accelerated their pace, and when they came opposite to him he rode in with them at full speed, whipping, spurring, and blowing, as if he would have infused his whole soul into the courage, speed, and perseverance of his favourite racer." But when the race was over, whether he won or lost seemed to be a matter of perfect indifference to him, and he immediately directed his conversation to the next race, whether he had a horse to run or not. But on coming into office with Lord North, Charles James Fox sold his horses, and erased his name from the several clubs of which he was a member.



It was not long, however, before he again purchased a stud, and we soon find him attending the meeting at Newmarket. The King's messenger, writes Lord William Lennox,\* "was obliged to appear on the course to seek one of the Ministers of England among the sportsmen on the Heath to deliver despatches upon which the fate of the country might have depended." The messenger, he adds, hid his badge of office, which was a greyhound, not liking that the world should know that the King's adviser was amusing himself at Newmarket when he should have been serving him in the metropolis.

Another prominent man on the turf at this period was Lord Barrymore, who was known for his eccentricities and curious habits, surprising his friends by cooking fowls in a billiard room, or uncarting a blind stag for his hounds to follow. But, despite his peculiarities, he was very successful on the turf, although, unfortunately, his extravagances quickly swallowed up whatever he won. As Mr. Rice† remarks, "His hunting establishment was more like that of Louis XIV. than of an English subject; his stud at Newmarket was kept up at an enormous outlay during the four years of its existence. With this young nobleman

\* "My Recollections, 1806—1873," i., 316-17.

† "History of the British Turf," i., 54.



everything was done *en prince*, reckless of consequence or cost, and when he died at a very early age he had been for some time a hopelessly ruined man."

The Goodwood races, the most aristocratic meeting in the kingdom, were established in 1802 by the third Duke of Richmond, and have ever since been fostered and patronized by the reigning representative of that house. But, as Lord William Lennox remarks, "what a contrast can be drawn between the meeting of 1802 and the present time." The grand stand, a small wooden building with a thatched roof, was occupied by the principal families of the neighbourhood; while the yeoman, the farmer, the labourer, and the tradesman, with their buxom wives, and ruddy-cheeked daughters, took up their stations in every sort of vehicle, or on horseback, opposite the winning post. Champagne luncheons, Lord William Lennox adds, were unknown, and the luxuries of claret cup and Wenham Lake ice were as little thought of as a *terriner de foie gras*, or a glass of chartreuse is sought after by a Boer in the jungles of Africa. A sandwich, a crust of bread, and a piece of cheese, with a glass of old October, formed the mid-day repast of the upper ten thousand, while their wives and daughters



partook of cake, fruit, and cowslip wine. But *tempora mutantur*, the stand is honoured by the presence of royalty, and the course is thronged with men of all classes.

Few men acquired greater notoriety in the last century than the Marquis of Queensberry; but, alas! for him, his business was pleasure, his passions were women and the turf, although he contrived to gratify both without impairing either his fortune, or his constitution. He was thoroughly versed in all the mysteries of the turf, and seldom indulged in any sort of gaming unconnected with it, or relating to matters where any undue advantage could be taken of him. He had a genuine taste for racing, always maintaining from thirty to forty animals in training.

An amusing anecdote is told by Lord William Lennox of the first Marquis of Westminster.\* He had a horse heavily engaged in the Craven meeting, and a few days before he was to run a report was circulated that he coughed. But whence the report? It appears "a man had been hired to be all night on the roof of the stable to ascertain the fact, which he proclaimed. His authority, however, had been doubted. Another man was employed to perform the same office on

\* "My Recollections from 1806-1873," ii., 6-7.



the following night, which, coming to the ears of the trainer, was immediately communicated to his noble employer. 'Have we no horse that coughs?' inquired his lordship. 'We have one, my lord,' was the reply. 'Then,' said his lordship, 'let him be put in the stall over which the fellow is to pass the night, and if he does not catch his death from this cold north-east wind and sleet, we shall do very well.' Of course, the odds became heavy against the animal, from the report of this second herald; and his lordship pocketed a large sum by his horse, who won his race with ease."

In 1756, the Duke of Bridgewater, when only twenty years of age, appears from the *Racing Calendar* to have kept race-horses, occasionally riding them himself. Though in after life a very bulky man, he was so light as a youth that on one occasion Lord Ellesmere says a bet was jokingly offered that he would be blown off his horse. Dressed in a livery of blue silk and silver, with a jockey cap, he once rode a race against his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland, on the long terrace at the back of the wood in Trentham Park, the seat of his relative, Earl Gower. During his Royal Highness's visit the large old greenhouse, since taken down, was hastily run up for the playing of skittles; and



prison-bars and other village games were instituted for the recreation of the guests.\*

Lord Foley, who died in 1793, entered upon the turf with an estate of £18,000 per annum and £100,000 ready money. But the close of his turf career was very different, for he left with a ruined constitution, an encumbered estate, and not a shilling of ready money.

General Peel enjoyed a long career on the turf, his connection with it having commenced with the Duke of Richmond and Lord Stradbroke at Goodwood. He, no doubt, partly owed his taste to his uncle, Edmund Peel, one of the best sportsmen of the age, and who was one of the chief supporters of racing in the Midland Counties. His brightest and best year was in 1844, when he ran first and second for the Derby with Orlando and Ionian, although the impostor, Running Rein, enjoyed for a time the honours of Derby winner. This piece of deception has long become a household story; but such a flagrant attempt at personation and robbery was never before known on the turf, and is not likely to be again imitated from the precautions that are put in force, and the certainty of detection, and punishment, that would await the offender.† After a

\* "Lives of the Engineers," Smiles, i., 337.

† *Baily's Magazine of Sports and Pastimes*, 1861, 276-7.



series of brilliant victories General Peel disposed of his stud on the 18th August, 1851; but the fame of his magnificent collection attracted buyers from all parts of Europe, the sum realized being over 12,000 guineas.

The cause of his retirement from the turf as an owner of horses was due to his taking office under Lord Derby, and his having insufficient time to devote to the management of so large an establishment as the one he had created, and carried on, with so much success.

Another excellent judge of racing was the second Earl of Exeter, Newmarket being the great theatre of his operations. Such was the care that he took of the lads, employed about the stables, that a schoolmaster was specially engaged for them, in order that they might receive an education suitable to their sphere in life, and be protected from the temptations which assailed them in the town. He used to maintain that, between the best jockey ever tossed into the saddle, and a good stable boy, there was no very great difference. "Give me three pounds the best of the weights," he was in the habit of saying, with a characteristic chuckle, "and I will run the match over again to-morrow with Norman, whom you call 'the post-boy,' upon mine, and with anybody you like upon yours."\*

\* "Racing and Steeplechasing," the Badminton Library, 193.



The Earl of Clermont, "the father of the turf" in his time, and who died at Brighton on 29th November, 1805, was nicknamed the 'Princess Amelia.' It appears that on a certain occasion he accompanied the Prince of Wales to Bagshot, and being an invalid, and the season winter, his lordship wrapped his head in a capacious flannel hood. Their fellow passengers were struck with the laudable act of duty on the part of the Prince, remarking, "What an excellent young man he was to go out thus an airing with his old aunt the Princess Amelia."

In the same year as Lord Clermont's decease, by the death of the Duke of Bedford, the turf was deprived of a famous champion, this nobleman having kept one of the best studs of race-horses in the country; while in 1821 Sir Charles Bunbury, another eminent supporter of the turf, passed away. Passionately fond of horses from his early youth, his eyes, it is said, were so good that he was able to see the horses the length of the Beacon Course; but the achievement, after all, he was most proud of was having been the owner of the winner of the first Derby.

It was more as a sportsman than a politician that Lord Stradbroke was known, one secret of his popularity being his quiet manner, utterly free from hauteur. Although he liked



winning as much as other people, yet he was singularly free from jealousy, and always knew when he was beaten. As a courser he was for many years unsurpassed, in connection with which a charming instance is recorded of his genuineness of character in acknowledging defeat. The writer says \* :—" We recollect riding a course with him some years back at Ashdown, in which his Morel was pitted against Mr. Bowles's Boscabel. Both did brilliant work. Boscabel, by her admirable judgment, uncoupled by anything false or shirking, managed, by keeping the upper ground, to score a balance of points in her favour, and his lordship remarked to us, ' We need not wait for the decision. I am just beaten by the cleverness of Mr. Bowles's bitch.' "

As founder of the Oaks, named after his seat in Surrey, the twelfth Earl of Derby will long be remembered as an enthusiastic supporter of the turf, his connection with it having lasted over sixty years. Few men, too, took greater delight in cock-fighting, and under his care the Knowsley breed of black-breasted reds was brought to a high state of perfection. In his day, it must be remembered, that cocking was "as respectable a sporting taste as a gentleman could have. Nobody had thought of writing it down, far less of legis-

\* *Baily's Magazine*, 1861, 53.



lating against it; and it was as reputable to fight a main of cocks as to hunt the fox.”\*

Speaking of cock-fighting, Grantley Berkeley alludes to the “Cockpit Royal” in Tufton Street, Westminster, where he first witnessed a main of cocks. It was here, he says, “the grandfather of the present Duke of York—notorious for his extraordinary appearance—went to see one of the great ‘mains’ of the day.”

While a very severe battle was in progress, the large odds often changing from side to side, his Grace remarked to a friend seated by him —

“Well, I don’t understand why they should offer these odds on the red; if I betted I should say two to one on the yellow.”

“Done with you, butcher,” roared an eager voice from a costermonger behind him, while a huge dirty hand gave him a knock on the back to obtain his attention; “I’ll take it.”

But times, in this respect, have materially changed, and what was once considered an exciting and manly sport has long ceased to be regarded as such. Indeed, apart from the legislation which now makes it a misdemeanour, such an inhuman sport would not be tolerated nowadays, and very rightly so. Occasionally, it is true, the law is broken, but happily public opinion has endorsed

\* “Rice’s History of the British Turf,” i., 179.



the decision of Parliament, which forbade this pastime as cruel.

The fourteenth Earl of Derby, scholar, orator, and thrice Prime Minister, was an enthusiastic supporter of the turf, an interesting anecdote of whom is told by Greville, in his diary for May, 1833: "I went to the Oaks on Wednesday, where Lord Stanley kept house for the first, and probably (as the house is for sale) for the last time. It passed off very well . . . racing all the morning, and whist and blind hookey in the evening. It was curious to see Stanley. Who would believe they beheld the orator and statesman, only second, if second, to Peel in the House of Commons, and on whom the destiny of the country perhaps depends? There he was, as if he had no thought but for the turf, full of the horses, interest in the betting, eager, blunt, noisy, good-humoured 'has meditans nugas et totus in illis;' at night equally devoted to the play as if his future depended on it. Thus, can a man relax whose existence is devoted to great, and serious, thought."

The racing career of Lord Palmerston was a model of that moderation which is worthy of the imitation of all betting men. When his mare, Ilione, won the Cesarewitch in the year 1841, he thus writes: "I had but one horse in training,



and that was Ilione, and she won me about £1,700 at Newmarket, in one stake, and though John Day will, no doubt, send me in a large bill to set against these winnings, yet a decent surplus must remain." This mare was by Priam, and Lord Palmerston named her Ilione, because she was "*Maxima natarum Priami*." Curious to say, the quantity of the second *i* produced a great deal of betting, which was set at rest by an appeal to the Master of Trinity, who decided it was short. But Lord Palmerston, on being informed of the discussion, said "they might call her just what they liked so long as she won the Cesarewitch." His jockeys were confined to the Day family, who were justly proud of their connection with Broadlands, five of its members having had Lord Palmerston's jacket.

Grandfather Day was a special favourite with the Premier, and often, when laid up with the gout, the kind-hearted Minister would sit by his bedside, discussing the topics of the day. Acquainting him one day with the change of Ministry, the old man replied, "Yes, my lord, but they tells I as how *you* are the cleverest up there among them, for it does not signify which side goes out, *you* always manages to keep in." In short, when seeking recreation from the harassing cares of State in the turf and the covert-side, he was no



longer the Prime Minister, but the thorough sportsman. It was through old John Day's—son of grandsire Day—advice that he sent up Ilione to be trained at Danebury, with the result already mentioned, and when the old man came to settle with the Premier, and to pay him over the stakes, he was fond of remarking that “nothing could exceed his lordship's great kindness; he saw me directly, shook me by the hand, gave me joy, handed me a chair, ran his eye over the bill, never objected to a single item, and when I offered to give him a cheque for the difference, which was over fifteen hundred, he got up and gave me a pen with his own hand, and concluded his interview by saying, ‘John, I will do anything for you.’”

Lord Palmerston had great hopes of winning the Derby of 1860 with Mainstone, but this horse broke down shortly before the race with strong suspicion of foul play. On May 21st of that year, the following entry occurs in his diary, and one which will doubtless be read with curiosity in years to come: “John Day and Professor Spooner, about Mainstone. Settled he should run on Wednesday. Shaftesbury about church appointments. Powell to ask about Mainstone. Sidney Herbert about his evidence to be given to-morrow before Committee on army organization.” Main-



stone did run, and came in about tenth. Shortly afterwards Lord Palmerston retired from the turf; but his memory will probably always be associated with the Derby day, for it was through his appeal to the House of Commons, that a holiday was granted on this gala day of the "Isthmian games," as he styled the Epsom week.

On the other hand, unlike Lord Palmerston, Lord George Bentinck, although he was possessed of an "industrious, unselfish patriotism," and earnest political views, yet marred his ardent love for horse-racing by betting much too heavily. It was his example, says the *Quarterly Review*, "perhaps, as much as that of any other patron of the turf, which prepared the way for the heavy gambling of the Hastings era." Yet, great were his services to the turf through the reforms which he introduced. Thus he introduced the method of "vanning" racers, insisted that all stewards, trainers, and jockeys, should be strictly punctual, and started the practice of saddling, and parading, all horses before the stands. He dealt sternly with every man whom he believed to be dishonest, and urged that every defaulter should be rigidly excluded.

At one Newmarket Craven Meeting the famous "Squire" Osbaldeston claimed a bet from him.



“Lord George,” he said, “I want £400 I won of you at Heaton Park.”

“You want £400 you swindled me of at Heaton Park,” Lord George answered.

A duel followed. Lord George first fired and missed. Perfectly unmoved he called out —

“Now, Squire, it’s two to one in your favour.”

“Why, then, the bet’s off,” Osbaldeston answered, and fired in the air.

One of his greatest turf disappointments was his selling his horse, Surplice, just before he won the Derby. “All my life,” he said next day to Mr. Disraeli, “have I been trying for this, and for what have I sacrificed it?” His friend in vain tried to comfort him, but he only answered, “You do not know what the Derby is.” Nevertheless, whatever his love for the turf, in the hour of duty it was all forgotten, as may be gathered from the following passage: “On Monday, the 29th May, 1846, when the resolution in favour of a ten shilling differential duty for the colonies had been carried, and carried by his casting vote, ‘the blue ribbons of the turf were all forgotten.’ Not for all the honours and successes of all the meetings, Spring or Autumn, Newmarket, Epsom, Goodwood, Doncaster, would he have exchanged that hour of rapture. His eye sparkled with fire, his nostril dilated with triumph, his sanguine



spirit saw a future of continuous and illimitable success. ‘We have saved the colonies,’ he said. ‘I knew it must be so. It is the knell of free trade.’”

In his family and social relations Lord George Bentinck betrayed certain idiosyncrasies, and Mr. Day, in his “Reminiscences of the Turf,” tells us how, when the Duchess of Portland died, just before the Doncaster race week he wrote to his trainer, saying:—“As my mother will be buried before the races, the event will make no difference to the running of my horses, so take them as before arranged.” His “father,” the old Duke of Portland, was also fond of racing, in connection with which Mr. Day tells us an amusing incident:—“When Amphiaraus won for him at Newmarket, he rode up to the old red stand saddling enclosure, to which in those days privileged persons on horseback had the *entrée*, a right now done away with, and waited until my father had returned from weighing, and had mounted his hack. Then, before all the people, his Grace exclaimed in an audible and solemn voice —

“‘John Day, you are a thief!’ and, without waiting for a reply, but smiling graciously, added, ‘you stole that race for me!’” This was the only occasion, he adds, on which he ever



heard any attempt on the part of the Duke to be witty.

But if Lord George Bentinck betted heavily, what shall be said of the unfortunate Marquis of Hastings, whose reckless conduct did much to injure the prestige of the turf? Indeed, it has been remarked that "there was something approaching to insanity in the way in which he scattered his means; a suicidal rendering of the *tela sparsimus* which speaks to the honours of his family. And then the return—the great object to be obtained—was so small in comparison with the risk he courted. He had not, too, even, a sportsman's excuse for his prodigality. He had no personal prowess, was no horseman, and cared little or nothing for the hounds he kept for a season or so, for he would leave them in the field on the first opportunity; whilst the thousands he wagered on a plating race might, as far as real sport was concerned, as well have depended on the length of a straw or the colour of a cow."

At the same time, hard as such a criticism of his character may seem, it must be admitted that at first he loved his race-horse, although unfortunately he too quickly learnt to value him only as an instrument of gambling. Without going into the details of the Marquis of Hastings' turf career, it may be remembered



that the scratching of The Earl for the Derby, and the report that Admiral Rous had put down Lady Elizabeth's shameful defeat in that race to the administration of an overdose of laudanum, created a great sensation, and gave rise to a very animated correspondence in the *Times*, in which Admiral Rous took the lead, concluding his letter thus:—"Lord Hastings has been shamefully deceived, and with respect to the scratching of The Earl, Lord Westmoreland came up to town early on Tuesday from Epsom to beseech Lord Hastings not to commit such an act. On his arrival in Grosvenor Square he met Mr. Hill going to Weatherby's, with the order in his pocket to scratch The Earl, and Mr. Padwick closeted with Lord Hastings. In justice to the Marquis of Hastings, I state that he stood to win thirty-five thousand pounds by The Earl, and did not hedge his stake money. Then you will ask, 'Why did he scratch him?' What can the poor fly demand from the spider in whose web he is enveloped?"

To this letter Lord Hastings replied as follows:

"SIR,—I have read with the greatest astonishment a letter in *The Times* of to-day bearing the signature of Admiral Rous. I can only characterize this letter as a tissue of misrepresentation from first to last. There is no one single circum-



stance mentioned as regards my two horses—Lady Elizabeth and The Earl—correctly stated. I wish also to add that, so far from being ‘shamefully deceived,’ as stated in Admiral Rous’s letter, The Earl was scratched by my express desire and authority, and that I myself wrote to Messrs. Weatherby to scratch him, and that no one either prompted me or suggested to me to adopt that course.” This letter, as might be imagined, caused a stir in the racing world, and was much commented upon.

For some time “The Earl affair,” as this turf scandal was called, created widespread interest, but eventually came to an end with the following letters, which were interchanged between the plaintiff and defendant:—

“SIR,—On the 16th June last a letter appeared in your columns from Admiral Rous, under the title of ‘Admiral Rous on the Turf,’ containing reflections upon me and my family.

“I have now to request the favour of your giving publicity to a letter which has been addressed to me by the Admiral, withdrawing his former letter, and a copy of which I beg to enclose.

“I am, sir,

“Your obedient servant,

“JOHN DAY.

“Jan. 19th, 1869.”



“ 13, Berkeley Square,

“ Jan. 18.

“ SIR,—As the legal proceedings pending between us have been stopped by you, I now withdraw my letter published in *The Times* newspaper of the 16th June, and the fact of my having addressed a second letter to the editor on the same day, requesting him not to insert the first, is a proof that I did not consider myself justified in desiring it to be published.

“ I am, sir,

“ Yours,

“ H. J. ROUS.

“ To Mr. Day.”

Anyhow, this was considered an unsatisfactory termination to a very grave charge, and, as the *Saturday Review* very justly pointed out, “To hush up such a case aggravates it. ‘Brother, brother, we’re both in the wrong,’ may be a very amiable sentiment, and is a very convenient conclusion in this case. But the case is just one of those in which two wrongs certainly do not make one right.”

To give one further incident connected with this sadly unfortunate career, when a few days before his death he acknowledged to a friend that the Hermit hit had fairly broken his heart, he added, “I didn’t show it, did I?” And so,



broken-hearted and bankrupt, he was laid with his father, "having crowded into six years more Corinthian excitement and weightier turf cases than many *fast men* know in a life-time—having in this short interval actually frittered two fine family estates."

Lord Glasgow, with his curious traits of character, and eccentric habits, was a familiar figure on the turf, his connection with it having lasted half a century. He supported his favourite sport with a lavish expenditure, laying out as much as sixty thousand pounds a year upon it, although his successes were by no means in accordance with his outlay. His theories of breeding were no doubt partly the cause of ill luck; added to which he had his own peculiar theories as to how jockeys should ride in his races, and matches. When Achievement started for her One Thousand Guineas, writes Mr. James Rice,\* it was long odds on her winning if no accident happened to her in the race. Lord Glasgow swelled the field with one of his roan fillies, unnamed and unknown to fame. His orders to the jockey were to make the running, and cut down his field. The wretched filly carrying the Glasgow colours was last, out-paced from the start.

\* "History of the British Turf," ii., 249.



The jockey was joined after passing the post by Lord Glasgow on his cob, and in a most unpleasant frame of mind. The Earl accompanied his jockey to the Bird-cage, riding a couple of yards behind him, and remonstrating with him, "You disobedient young gentleman, did I not tell you to make the running, eh?"

Another of his peculiarities was his dislike of naming his young stock, which was the cause of no small inconvenience to the sporting world; but in other respects he was not unlike most of the sporting community. Thus, in his younger days, he was extremely fond of betting, and would oftentimes lay very heavy wagers after dinner, or over the card table. One story runs that Lord George Bentinck, looking in at Crockford's on the eve of the Derby, offered to take three to one against his horse Gaper.

"I'll lay it you," answered Lord Glasgow.

"Yes," said Lord George, "but then I want to do it to money."

"I'll lay you ninety thousand to thirty," was the quick and ready response.

Among further devoted followers of the turf may be mentioned Sir Joseph Hawley, winner of three Derbys, two of them in consecutive years, Lord Ailesbury, the Marquis of Anglesey, and the Earl of Strafford, the last having been



joint steward of the Jockey Club with General Anson and the Duke of Bedford during that stormy period in the annals of the turf when the Qui Tam actions called forth all the energy and hostility of Lord George Bentinck. Then there was Thomas Egerton, Earl of Wilton, who had the advantage of having been what is technically called a natural horseman, gifted by nature with a figure which enabled him to ride lighter than most of the gentlemen jockeys of that age. Although for many years an owner of race-horses, he was not particularly successful; but connected with Pumicestone, with whom his lordship won the Chesterfield Cup at Goodwood in 1855, a rather curious anecdote exists, which is thus recorded in *Baily's Magazine*:—\*

“The colt had previously run as by Cotherstone out of Duchess of Lorraine, and Lord Wilton had not troubled himself about giving him a name. Shortly before the race, however, he received a letter from Lord Chesterfield, enclosing him one which he himself had got from a gentleman, stating that he had dreamed most distinctly a horse named Pumicestone had won the Chesterfield Cup at Goodwood, and as he could not see one of that name in the entry, he concluded it must be Lord Wilton's animal that had not been

\* 1863, p. 111.



named. The colt being got by Cotherstone, he did not consider Pumicestone altogether inappropriate, and, willing to humour the fancy of the dreamer, adopted the name, and saw the vision realized, for, without being quoted in the market, he beat Vanderdecken and a large field very cleverly."

During Lord St. Vincent's brief career on the turf, the unfortunate defeat of Klarikoff was an event which created considerable interest. It appears that this horse belonged to a Mr. Padwick, and had been backed to win an enormous stake for the Derby. It was at this time that Lord St. Vincent dined at Mr. Padwick's house in Hill Street with several known members of the turf; when, as might be expected, the Derby monopolized the chief part of the conversation. In the course of dinner, Mr. Padwick was asked by Lord St. Vincent if he would sell Klarikoff, to which he replied, "it was impossible."

"But, why not?" added his lordship.

"For many reasons," said Mr. Padwick; "because, in the first place, I could never make a market of a horse at my own table; in the second, because I really could not put a price upon him; thirdly, because I could not remove him from John Scott's stable, as his friends were all on him; and fourthly, because I do not want to part with him."



But Lord St. Vincent was bent on having the horse, and in the drawing-room pressed him to let him have half of it, if he would not part with the whole. It was finally agreed that Lord St. Vincent should have a half-share in Klarikoff, the sum asked being five thousand pounds. "I will have it," exclaimed his lordship. "I think it moderate, and imagined you would have asked twice as much."

"But," rejoined his host, "you shall not buy this evening; sleep on your offer, and if you come to me to-morrow and want to be off the bargain, you shall be in an instant."

How Klarikoff was eventually beaten at the Derby is matter of history; but, mortifying as this event was, it did not discompose Lord St. Vincent, although a still further misfortune was in store for him. As Klarikoff was returning from Epsom to Malton, on the Great Northern Railway, his life was lost by the van taking fire from a spark from the engine, neither of the owners receiving any compensation for the serious loss. And thus ended one of those romantic episodes for which the turf has always been more or less famous.

Charles Mathews never lost his love for the turf, as may be gathered from his own amusing words :—"Behold me at my first race. It would



be absurd to attempt to describe now what I felt then. I do not affect to recollect the name of a horse or the colour of a rider ; but I do remember that these ‘terrible, terrible high-bred cattle,’ being the first racing blood I had ever seen, had such an inspiring effect that I was then, and there, inoculated with a mania that has prevailed until this hour. Yes ! lame and worn as I am, I admit of no difficulty ; I allow of no impediment. I am indifferent as to distance—but to the races I must go, whether Doncaster or Epsom, Leger or Derby. I have left Glasgow with the penalty attached of two nights’ travelling in order to be at Newmarket on Easter Monday, and have witnessed twenty-five contests for Derby and Oaks since 1803. I have frequently ridden on horseback from London to the neighbourhood of Epsom at night after my performance, to sup with friends, rather than encounter the dust of the roads on the ‘great day,’ as it is called. This will show that my enthusiasm is not abated.”

Lord Jersey was a successful owner of race-horses. In his opinion breeding did not pay, and it is reported that he once pithily, if severely, said, “If you wish to do your bitterest enemy an injury, give him a brood-mare well engaged in produce stakes, with the promise



to keep it, and in a few years his ruin will be complete.”\*

Another noted figure that for many years was regarded as the *beau idéal* of an English sportsman was George Payne, although his turf experiences were never those of a happy man. A volume might be filled with the sayings of this extraordinary man, who was always ready with a smart remark. “It was the twinkle in his eye,” we are told, “combined with the otherwise imperturbable set of his facial muscles, that while he was enunciating the most astounding paradox, or making an apparently commonplace remark, would send a room full of people into roars of laughter, when the same thing said by anyone else would not have provoked a smile. It mattered not to whom he was talking—the gravest statesman, the most matter-of-fact money-grabber, the shyest girl ‘out’ for the first time in her life, one and all, old or young, left him with the unalterable conviction that George Payne was the most delightful companion he or she had ever come across; and this charm of manner never left him to the day of his death, at seventy-five years of age.”

A staunch friend of George Payne was old Admiral Rous—whose name has already been inci-

\* Day’s “Reminiscences of the Turf,” 157.



dentally mentioned—another noted figure on the turf. He was one of the rare instances of a man “whose deafness did not seem materially to affect his enjoyment of society—for he certainly was very deaf, though no doubt he heard many things which were not intended to reach his ears; indeed, his friends used to say that he never missed hearing an offer of a good match at Newmarket. Match-making was his delight; his affectation of bewilderment over the form of two horses whose merits he knew as well as he did the Rowley mile, his start of sudden inspiration, his solemn and deliberate announcement of the weight, his pompous mandate, “hands in pockets, gentlemen!” followed by “show,” and his glee when the half-crowns of two acceptors rewarded his skill, were treats to see and to hear. Perhaps one reason why he was never bored in company, even when he could not hear the conversation, was that he had the resource of constant mental handicapping.\*

When his life was drawing very near its close—in fact, a few days before he was confined to his room—he said to one of his intimate friends, “It’s a very odd thing. I lose my way now going from the Turf Club, then to Grafton Street, to my house in Berkeley Square, but,” he added, with a gleam of satisfaction, “*I can still handicap.*”

\* Badminton Library : Racing, 70.



On one occasion Lord Calthorpe said to him, referring to one of his recently published handicaps, "Now, Admiral, do you think that *my* horse has any chance for this race?"

"None whatever," unhesitatingly replied the Admiral.

"Then pray, do you call that handicapping? I thought that every horse was at any rate *supposed* to be given an equal chance?"

It was a well-directed liberality in turf matters, writes Mr. Hunter, that strengthened the popularity which Lord Mayo's genial address, and love of field sports, won for him in India. "It should be remembered," he adds, "that almost the whole horse supply has to be imported in India, and that costly stud establishments form a regular charge on the revenues. In such a state of things racing acquires a very different significance from what it now has in England. It is a work of political importance to encourage the production of a decent quality of horse, and to induce the native landholders to keep well-bred stallions so as to form small studs." Accordingly, in his private capacity, Lord Mayo did what he could by cups and donations to the Turf Clubs, and by encouraging horse-shows, to create an interest in horses. At first he ran a few race-horses of his own, and throughout "his Indian career his personal knowledge, and experience, and purse, were



at the service of any well-devised, and honestly-conducted, effort to improve the breed of horses.”

Among eminent lawyers who have taken a pleasure in the turf may be mentioned Baron Martin. When travelling as judge on the Western Circuit, he was invited to dine with the Warden of Winchester College. After bidding his guest good-night, the venerable Warden turned to a friend and said, “The Judge is a man of great common-sense and shrewdness; but, for a gentleman, he is the most ignorant man I ever knew. He had never even heard of William of Wykeham!”

But the Baron had a ground of complaint against the Warden, for as he drove away in his carriage he complained to his marshal, “Well, for a learned man, the Warden is the most ignorant man I ever met, for he did not know that John Day had training-stables at Danebury!”

While staying at Littlehampton, in his early life, Lord Westbury—then Mr. Bethell—occasionally visited the training-stables in the neighbourhood, and thus acquired a knowledge of racing matters, which on one occasion was displayed with considerable effect.

“The Earl of Albemarle,” writes Mr. Nash, in his “Life of Lord Westbury,” “had a horse which was thought to have an excellent chance of winning



one of the classic races. The Earl, however, died before the race came off, having on his death-bed given the horse, by way of *donatio mortis causâ*, to Lady Albemarle. After his death there was some doubt as to the validity of the gift, and it was feared that the executor might come in with his paramount, and take possession of the animal. It was important to have the control of the favourite pending the race. In these circumstances Mr. Bethell was instructed to advise what proceedings should be taken to restrain the executor from gaining possession of the horse. There was a consultation at his chambers, when a large number of sporting men filled the room. Mr. Bethell, adapting his manner to what he thought would best suit his company, addressed them in sporting language, the substance of his advice being thus —

“ ‘ You must guard the horse with ceaseless vigilance night and day ; for that purpose be careful to engage a sufficient number of men. Now, remember, if any attempt is made to seize the horse, you are not to strike the first blow ; but if one blow is struck by the invaders, you may strike twenty.’ The sportsmen retired, well pleased to find that the rules of equity so nearly coincided with their ideas of natural justice.”

Although blind, John Metcalf was a capital



horseman, and would run his horse for the petty prizes or plates given at the feasts in his neighbourhood, attending the races at York and other places, where he made bets with considerable skill. On one occasion he rode his horse in a match at Knaresborough Forest. The ground was marked out by posts, including a circle of a mile, and the race was three times round. Great odds were laid against the blind man, because of his supposed inability to keep the course. "But his ingenuity," writes Mr. Smiles,\* "was never at fault. He procured a number of dinner bells from the Harrogate inns, and set men to ring them at the several posts. Their sound was enough to direct him during the race, and the blind man came in the winner.

"After this race was over, a gentleman who owned a notorious runaway horse came up and offered to lay a bet with Metcalf that he could not gallop the horse fifty yards and stop it within two hundred. Metcalf accepted the bet, with the condition that he might choose his ground. This was agreed to, but there was to be neither hedge nor wall in the distance. Metcalf forthwith proceeded to the neighbourhood of the large bog near the Harrogate old Spa, and having placed a person on the line in which he

\* "Lives of the Engineers," i., 211-12.



proposed to ride, who was to sing a song to guide him by its sound, he mounted, and rode straight into the bog, where he had the horse effectually stopped within the stipulated two hundred yards, stuck up to his saddle-girths in the mire. Metcalf scrambled out and claimed his wager, but it was with great difficulty the horse could be extricated." This, among other stories, the blind engineer used to relate with much pride; and, despite his want of sight, he was not only a skilled horseman, but even a match for those who possessed the advantage of eyesight.



## CHAPTER VI.

### GAMBLING.

Earl of Carlisle—Lord Holland—C. J. Fox—T. Beauchamp—Lord George Anson—Pitt—Wilberforce—George Selwyn—Earl of Derby—Sir E. Fawkener—Duke of Queensberry—Beau Nash—Alderman Combe—Lord Clive—C. J. Napier—Lord Stair—John Wilkes—Oliver Goldsmith—Marquis of Rockingham—Lord Orford—Lord Robert Spencer—Duke of Bedford—Duke of Norfolk—Dennis O'Kelly—Beau Brummell—Lord Mountford—Lord Worthall—Sir William Colepepper—Mr. Payne—Lord Londesborough.

AT the latter end of the last and beginning of the present century gambling was carried on to an extravagant extent among many of our leading men who frequented the West-End clubs. George Selwyn used to declare that there was nothing in the heavens above, or the earth below, or the waters under the earth, upon which men would not contrive to bet. Some idea of the rage for this ruinous fashion may be gathered from the betting books at White's and Brookes's Clubs, wherein



may be found bets on all conceivable subjects—bets on the length of a life, on the duration of a Ministry, on a rascal's risk of the halter, on a placeman's prospect of a coronet, on the chances of an election, on the sanity of the king, on the shock of an earthquake, or on the last scandal. A man dropped down at the door of White's, and was carried into the house. Was he dead or not? The odds were immediately given and taken for and against. It was proposed to bleed him. Those who had taken the odds the man was dead protested that the use of a lance would affect the fairness of the bet. A Mr. Blake betted £1,500 that a man could live twelve hours under water; hired a desperate fellow, and sank him in a ship by way of experiment. Neither ship nor man reappeared.\* The betting-book, too, at Brookes's reveals that simultaneously with the staking of five thousand pounds by the Earl of Carlisle on a single card at faro, wagers were made during the American Revolutionary War as to which of the bachelor members would be married before the other, which would first be a father, and whether the child born would be a boy or a girl. Lord Carlisle's passion for play, and reckless habit of betting, at one time threatened to plunge him hopelessly into pecuniary difficulties. But, for-

\* *National Review.*



tunately, "the deep sense which he entertained of his own folly, the almost maddening moments to which he refers in his letters of self-condemnation and bitter regret, and, subsequently, his noble victory over the siren enticements of pleasure, and his thorough emancipation from the trammels of a domineering passion, made adequate amends for his previous unhappy career."\* Thus, in one of his letters to his friend George Selwyn, dated July, 1776, he writes:—"I have undone myself, and it is to no purpose to conceal from you my abominable madness and folly—though, perhaps, the particulars may not be known to the rest of the world. I never lost so much in five times as I have done to-night, and am in debt to the house for the whole. You may be sure I do not tell you this with an idea that you can be of the least assistance to me; it is a great deal more than your abilities are equal to."†

Lord Holland, the great political rival of the illustrious Chatham, was at one time of his life a reckless gamester. Sad to say, the first two or three years of his life, which he passed mostly on the Continent, after his removal from Eton, were devoted to dissipation and wild frolic, during which time he contrived to squander most of his

\* Jesse, "George Selwyn and his Contemporaries."

† This letter is endorsed by George Selwyn, "after the loss of £10,000."



patrimony at the gaming-table. But luckily his taste for literature, and his inclination to politics, afforded opportunities for repairing his embarrassed fortunes, which he did not fail to utilize.

“In his earlier life,” writes Walpole, “Mr. Fox had wasted his fortune in gaming. It had been replaced by some family circumstances, but was small, and he continued profuse. Becoming a most fond father, he took up an attention to enrich himself precipitately.” That he availed himself of the advantages and perquisites of office in an undue and improper manner is not at all unlikely, adds Mr. Jesse,\* but that he was guilty of the actual and sweeping frauds of which he was accused there is certainly more reason to doubt.

But it is not surprising that his son, Charles Fox, had the same love of gaming when it is remembered how his father encouraged his sons in the frolics and indiscretions of youth. Indeed, the report goes that when Charles Fox was only in his fifteenth year his father, during their residence at Spa, supplied him with a certain number of guineas every night to enable him to enjoy the excitement of the gaming table.

Accordingly Charles James Fox grew up an incorrigible gamester, and in the interesting memoir of his early days, by Sir George

\* “George Selwyn and his Contemporaries,” i., 183-4.



Trevelyan, many incidents are told respecting his inordinate gambling propensities. Indeed, it has been said of him that the order of his day was “from the House of Commons to the faro table, from the faro table to Newmarket, and from Newmarket to the House of Commons.” The gaming table had a fascination for him which even Downing Street could not counteract. His love of play would often entice him to sit up till a late hour in the morning, when, without going to bed, he proceeded to the House of Commons, and spoke with his accustomed eloquence. Gibbon writes to Lord Sheffield, February, 1771, in reference to the debate for relieving the clergy from subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles:—“I congratulate you on the late victory of our dear mamma—the Church of England, etc. By-the-bye, Charles Fox prepared himself for that holy work by passing twenty-two hours in the pious exercise of hazard. His devotion cost him only about five hundred pounds an hour, in all about eleven thousand pounds.” Again, great as his losses were, they did not prevent his cultivating his taste for letters, and oftentimes he would banish the depression occasioned by ill-successes in reading the Greek and Roman classics. One morning, after he had spent the whole night at faro, and lost heavily, Topham Beauclerk called early at his



lodgings, feeling anxious about him. On being informed that Mr. Fox was in the drawing-room, he walked somewhat nervously upstairs, expecting to find him in a state of despair. But great was his surprise when he saw him reading Herodotus. Noticing his friend's astonishment, Fox quietly said, "What would you have me do? I have lost my last shilling."

Always ready to bet, and ever liable to lose, it followed, as a natural result to such reckless conduct, that Fox, as Lord William Lennox says, "lived to see the day when he sold or mortgaged every source of livelihood or profit which he had hitherto been in the enjoyment of, including the proceeds of his sinecure office of Clerk of the Pells in Ireland, amounting to £2,000 a year, and his estate at Kingsgate, near Margate, bequeathed to him by his father." His best friends, also, are said to have been half ruined in annuities given by them as securities for him to the Jews, and their *esprit de corps* was known to the money-lenders and to the satirists, one of the latter writing:—

But, hark! the noise of battle from afar;  
The Jews and Macaronies are at war;  
The Jews prevail, and thundering from the stocks,  
They seize, they bind, they circumcise Charles Fox.

Horace Walpole, writing to General Conway, says:—"I do not think I can find in Patin or



Plato, nay, nor in Aristotle, a parallel case to Charles Fox. There are advertised to be sold more annuities of his and his society, to the amount of five hundred thousand pounds a year ! I wonder what he will do next, when he has sold the estates of all his friends ?” But neither the support of his friends, nor his skill as a player, was of any value to Fox against continued failure ; for his ill-luck was persistent :—

If he touches a card, if he rattles a box,  
Away fly the guineas of this Mr. Fox.  
He has met, I’m afraid, with so many hard knocks,  
The cash is not plenty with this Mr. Fox.  
And he always must lose, for the strongest of locks  
Cannot keep any money from this Mr. Fox.

Lord George Anson was fond of cards, but unfortunately his attachment to play caused him to lose a good deal of money, making him, it is said, “at home a victim to the knavery of his pretended friends.”

In early life Pitt was a gamester, and played with his friend Wilberforce, but finding this kind of recreation an insidious snare, he wisely threw it aside. Wilberforce, writing of this time, says : —“ We played a good deal at Goosetree’s, and I well remember the intense earnestness which Pitt displayed when joining in these games of chance. He perceived their increasing fascination, and soon afterwards abandoned them for ever.”



George Selwyn for many years was a devoted frequenter of the gaming-table. "The first time," writes Wilberforce, "I was at Brookes's, scarcely knowing anyone, I joined, from mere shyness, in play at the faro-table, where George Selwyn kept bank. A friend, who knew my inexperience, and regarded me as a victim decked out for sacrifice, called to me, 'What, Wilberforce! is that you?' Selwyn quite resented the interference, and turning to him said, in his most expressive tone, 'Oh, sir, don't interrupt Mr. Wilberforce; he could not be better employed.' " Latterly Selwyn is said to have given up his propensity for play, for "it was too great a consumer," he said, "of four things—time, health, fortune, and thinking," but there seems some uncertainty as to whether he really ever did so completely. He appears to have been a loser on the whole, but his gambling habits do not seem to have materially injured his fortune, for he died comparatively rich, and yet occasionally he had borrowed, as may be seen from the following letter of Edward, twelfth Earl of Derby, who was also a gamester:—"Nothing could equal what I feel at troubling you with this disagreeable note, but having lost a very monstrous sum of money last night, I find myself under the necessity of entreating your goodness to excuse the liberty I



am taking of applying to you for assistance. If it is not very inconvenient to you I should be glad of the money you owe me. If it is, I must pay what I can, and desire Brookes to trust me for the remainder." The wit and conversation of Selwyn must have enlivened the gaming-table, for he rarely missed an opportunity of making a joke when he had the chance of doing so. Observing the Postmaster-General, Sir Edward Fawkener, for instance, losing a large sum of money at piquet one night at White's, pointing to the successful player, Selwyn humorously remarked—"See now, he is robbing the *mail*!"

Coupled with his passion for the race-course, the Duke of Queensberry was devoted to gaming in any shape. But, unlike many who have indulged in such tastes, his personal property at his death amounted to nearly a million of money. Old Horace Walpole did not escape the influence of gambling, a propensity in which he seems to have indulged for a considerable time. In one of his letters he thus writes:—"A good lady last year was delighted at my becoming a peer, and said—'I hope you will get an Act of Parliament for putting down faro,' as if I could make Acts of Parliament! and could *I*, it would be very consistent, too, in me, who for some years played more faro than anybody."



Beau Nash, the well-known Master of the Ceremonies, of Bath, and whose name has long been a household word at that watering-place, was a gamester. At the time of his popularity gaming ran high at Bath, and frequently led to disputes and resort to the sword, then generally worn by well-dressed men. In consequence of this scandal, swords were prohibited by Nash in the public rooms, but they were still worn in the streets. His authority, however, was supreme in Bath, and his laws were so strictly enforced that "no rank would protect the offender, nor dignity of station condone a breach of the laws." One night, in consequence of a duel fought by torch-light by two notorious gamesters, Nash made the law absolute, "that no swords should on any account be worn in Bath." And yet, despite his popularity, he died in greatly reduced circumstances, having for the last sixteen years of his life depended solely on the precarious products of the gaming-table—a sad termination to what had been an eventful and distinguished career.

Lord Clive betted at cards, and in the cockpit, whereas Charles J. Napier was justly proud of neither gambling nor getting drunk, the avoidance of both which things he made no hesitation in telling his comrades. An amusing little anecdote is related of Lord Stair. The story goes that Lord



Mark Stair and himself were one day at play in a coffee-house, when a stranger intruded, and overlooked the game, at the same time interrupting them with questions. Irritated at his conduct, Lord Mark Stair said, "Let us throw dice to see which of us shall pink this impudent fellow." Lord Stair won, whereupon the other exclaimed—"Ah! Stair, Stair! You have always been more fortunate than me in life—than I."\*

John Wilkes, whatever his other vices, was in one particular superior to his contemporaries, for to the common vice of gaming he was not addicted. He mentions the fashionable game of faro only to say that he detests it, "as well as every other kind of gaming." When a youth, he was tempted to engage in play on one occasion, and lost five hundred guineas. His father paid the debt, and said to him, "Jack, mind you do so no more." He promised he would never offend again, and never afterwards touched a card. On the other hand, poor Oliver Goldsmith had, in addition to his other bad habits, an unfortunate taste for gambling, causing him to suffer losses which he could ill-afford. His reckless mismanagement of his affairs made matters still worse, and hence he was from time to time involved in those pecuniary difficulties, incidental allusions to which

\* Steinmetz, "The Gaming-Table," ii., 146.



will be found in Mr. Forster's interesting life, of his eventful career.

“Like Godolphin,” writes Earl Russell, “the Marquis of Rockingham loved gaming, and his singular wager with Lord Orford on a race between geese at Newmarket has been recorded by Horace Walpole, but he overcame this propensity on entering public life.” According to Captain Gronow, on one occasion Lord Robert Spencer contrived to lose, at Brookes's Club, the last shilling of his considerable fortune given him by his brother, the Duke of Marlborough. General Fitzpatrick, being much in the same condition, they agreed to raise a sum of money in order that they might keep a faro bank. The Club made no objection, and the members of the bank being winners, Lord Spencer took, as his share of the proceeds, £100,000. Having learnt, by his past losses, the value of his winnings, he, like a prudent man, retired “from the fetid atmosphere of play, with the money in his pocket, and never again gambled.”\*

Wrothesly, Duke of Bedford, who, like so many others of his day, squandered his money recklessly away at the gaming-table, was the victim of a piece of roguery which created immense excitement at the time. After being robbed at

\* “Bedford Correspondence,” iii., 307, note.



Bath by several first-rate sharpers of about £70,000 at hazard—among whom was Beau Nash, Master of the Ceremonies—he left the table in disgust, putting the dice, which had been loaded, in his pocket. Retiring to another room, he fell asleep, when the winners, to escape detection, took the dice from his pocket, exchanging them for fair ones. On awaking and finding the dice correct, he renewed play, and lost £30,000 more. But Beau Nash, dissatisfied with the previous division of the spoil, divulged the state of affairs to the Duke, who was thereby spared the rest of the money.

A similar anecdote is told of the Duke of Norfolk, who one evening lost the sum of £70,000 in a gaming house in St. James's Street. Suspecting foul play, he put the dice in his pocket, and, as was his custom when up late, took a bed in the house. "The blacklegs," it is said, "were all dismayed, till one of them offered for £5,000 to go to the Duke's room with a brace of pistols and a pair of dice, and, if the Duke was awake, to shoot him, if asleep, to change the dice! Fortunately for the gang, the Duke 'snored,' as the agent stated, 'like a pig;' so the dice were changed. His Grace had them broken in the morning, when, finding them good, he paid the money, and left off gambling."



A remarkable man, in his day, at the gaming-table, as well as on the turf, was Dennis O'Kelly, of whom innumerable anecdotes are told. According to one story, a bet for a large sum was once proposed to him, and accepted. But the proposer of the bet, somewhat astonished at the readiness of O'Kelly to take it, inquired where lay his *estates*, to answer for the amount if he lost? "My estates!" cried O'Kelly, "oh, if that's what you *mane*, I've a map of them here," and opening his pocket-book he exhibited bank-notes to ten times the sum in question, and ultimately added the inquirer's contribution to them.\* Another story runs that at the hazard-table one night he was seen turning over a *quire of bank notes*, when a friend asking him what he was looking for, he replied, "I am looking for a little one." On the friend offering to accommodate him, O'Kelly answered, "I want a fifty, or something of *that sort*, just to set the *caster*." At this moment he was supposed to have notes to the amount of seven or eight thousand pounds in his hand, but not one for less than a hundred.

Another inveterate gambler was Beau Brummell, who died penniless in the year 1840. Of the numerous anecdotes related of him the following well-known one used to be current at

\* Steinmetz, "The Gaming-Table," i., 374.



Brookes's. Among the members that indulged in high play was Alderman Combe, who made as much money in this way as he did by brewing. One evening, whilst he filled the office of Lord Mayor, he was busy at a full hazard-table, at which Beau Brummell was one of the party. "Come, Mash-tub," said the latter, who was the *caster*, "what do you set?" "Twenty-five guineas," replied the Alderman. "Well, then," returned Beau Brummell, "have at the mare's pony."\* He continued to throw until he drove home the brewer's twelve ponies running; and then, getting up, and making him a low bow, whilst pocketing the cash, he said, "Thank you, Alderman; for the future I shall never drink any porter but yours." "I wish, sir," replied the brewer, in not very parliamentary language, "that every other blackguard in London would tell me the same."

Another story of a somewhat sensational character is told by Mr. Raikes:—"One evening at the macao table at Wattier's Club, when the play was very deep, Brummell, having lost a considerable sum, affected, in his farcical way, a very tragic air, and cried out, "Waiter, bring me a flat candlestick and a pistol." Upon which Bligh (a notorious madman), who was sitting opposite

\* A gaming term for twenty-five guineas.



to him, calmly produced two loaded pistols from his coat pocket, which he placed on the table and said, "Mr. Brummell, if you are really desirous to put a period to your existence, I am extremely happy to offer you the means without troubling the waiter." The effect upon those present may easily be imagined at finding themselves in the company of a known madman who had loaded weapons about him.

Theodore Hook was addicted to gaming, although not to the extent that has been commonly supposed. There is every probability that the following passage from "Gilbert Gurney" pictures his own first introduction to the gaming table and the effect it had upon him —

"I must confess that, after ten minutes' sojourn in the midst of the motley group, all those alarms and prejudices which had been so prudently instilled into my mind as to the horrors of gaming houses, had utterly and entirely subsided; I saw nothing but good humour and good fellowship. Some won their tens, and twenties, and fifties with perfect good nature, and others lost them with equal complacency."

It may be added that it was Theodore Hook who, for some years, enlightened the public as to the meaning of a word then much in use. "The



room in St. James's Palace," he tells us, "formerly appropriated to hazard, was remarkably dark, and conventionally called by the inmates of the palace, 'Hell,' whence, and not as generally supposed from their own merits, all the gaming houses in London have been designated by the same fearful name."

Lord Mountford, through his incurable passion for reckless gambling, came to a tragic end. He was ready to bet on anything, and in the betting-book at White's is this entry: "Lord Mountford bets Sir John Bland thirty guineas that Nash outlives Cibber." On this foolish bet Walpole thus remarks: "How odd that these two old creatures, selected for their antiquities, should live to see both their wagers put an end to their own lives! Cibber is within a few days of eighty-four, still hearty and clear, and well. I told him I was glad to see him look so well. 'Faith,' said he, 'it is very well that I look at all.'" Lord Mountford would have been the winner; Cibber died in the year 1757, and Nash in 1761. But the end of Lord Mountford's miserable career is soon told. After losing his money, and fearing that he should be reduced to distress, he asked for a Government appointment, resolving "to throw the die of life or death on the answer received from Court." The reply was unfavourable. There was now only one



course open to him, and that was to terminate his life. Accordingly he supped at White's and played at whist till one o'clock of the New Year's morning, Lord Robert Bertie drinking to him "A happy New Year." But the game of life with him was played out, and in the morning, sending for a lawyer and three witnesses, he executed his will, at the same time asking if such a document would stand good though a man were to shoot himself. The reply being satisfactory, he said, "Pray, stay, while I step into the next room;" but he never returned—he had shot himself. The news, however, took no one by surprise, for it was a matter of common talk how desperate his continued losses had made him; and he had even asked several persons, "indirectly at first, afterwards pretty directly, on the easiest mode of finishing life."

Then there is the well-known desperate wager of Lord Worthall, who, at a gambling party, lost all his money. In a fit of excitement he staked his whole estate against £1,000 at cutting low with cards, and in cutting exclaimed —

"Up now Deuce, or else a Trey,  
Or Worthall's gone for ever and aye."

Fortunately for him he had the luck to cut the deuce of diamonds; and, to commemorate this moment of peril, he had the deuce of diamonds cut in marble and fixed on the parapet of his mansion.



A story is told of Sir William Colepepper that, after he had ruined himself at the gaming-table by his reckless disregard of the value of money, his whole delight was to sit there and see others gradually ruined. But, unmanly and despicable as such conduct was, it has been remarked that in the history of gambling there were many more who followed in his steps.

Numerous anecdotes of card-playing are told about Mr. Payne—so well known on the British turf—who spent a large portion of his time at the card-table. Of these stories, two of the best were told in the *Country Gentleman*.

Ecarté was, about forty years ago, the fashionable private game of the day, and many was the merry bout thereat which Mr. Payne fought out with several distinguished adversaries. It is a tradition of Limmer's that he and Lord Albert Denison (afterwards the first Lord Londesborough) sat up all night at the famous, but now extinguished, hostelry, and that when they separated in the morning, Lord Albert having lost about £30,000, proceeded to the adjoining temple of Hymen at St. George's, Hanover Square, to be married to his first wife, Henrietta Maria Forester, the sister of Lady Chesterfield.

With the same antagonist, and playing at the same game, Mr. Payne once set out from London



in a post-chaise to pay a visit to a country house in the New Forest. They played all day, and when night fell a lamp in the roof of the chaise was lighted, and they proceeded to deal and propose without intermission. Mr. Payne was in the midst of a capital run of luck, with £100 staked on each game, when they both became aware that the chaise had stopped, and that the bewildered postboy, who had lost his way, was tapping lustily with the butt-end of his whip at the window of the post-chaise to solicit the attention of its occupants.

“What do you want?” said Mr. Payne, testily.

“Please, sir, I have lost my way.”

“Come and tell us when you have found it,” was all the rejoinder that he could elicit.



## CHAPTER VII.

### HORSEMANSHIP.

Lord Westbury—Sir Francis Burdett—James Currie—  
Carlyle—Lord Palmerston—Lord Macaulay—Sydney  
Smith—Lord Tenterden—Paley—Viscount Exmouth—  
Lord Eldon—Warren Hastings—Sir Walter Scott—  
The Duke of Wellington—Lord Barrymore—Charles  
Mathews—Sir Charles James Napier—Whyte Melville  
—Bishop Wilberforce—John Leech—Josiah Wedgwood  
—Charles Lever—Charles James Mathews—Henry  
Fawcett.

“WHO is your doctor?” asked a friend one day of Carlyle. “My best doctor,” he replied, “is a horse.” Like Carlyle, many of our eminent men have indulged largely in horsemanship as an exercise productive of health, apart from the enjoyment it affords. Lord Palmerston spent several hours on horseback every day, a habit which, he maintained, kept him in health, and if from any reason prevented taking his accustomed ride, he walked. Anyhow, equestrian exercise suited him,



considering how little ill-effect hard work had on his health.

Lord Westbury was never so happy as when on horseback, and when Sir Francis Burdett in his old age was one day asked by Haydon how he had contrived to keep his health in such vigour for so many years, he told him, amongst other things, that he hunted as much as he could. Sydenham held similar views, and how high an opinion he had of horse-exercise may be inferred from his own words on the subject:—"If any man were possessed of a remedy that would do equal good to the human constitution as riding gently on horseback twice a day, he would be in the possession of what was worth the philosopher's stone."

Then there was the well-known case of James Currie, the eminent physician of the last century. On his recovery from an illness which he regarded as the precursor of consumption—of which several of his family had already died—he regarded his cure as principally due to riding on horseback. Indeed, so impressed was he with this circumstance that he sent an account of his illness to Dr. Darwin, which appeared in the *Zoonomia* with the prefatory remarks:—"The following case subjoined of hereditary consumption is related by a physician of great ability and



very extensive practice ; and, as it is his own case, abounds with much nice observation and useful knowledge ; and as it has been attended with a favourable event, may give consolation to many who are in a similar situation, and shows that Sydenham's recommendation of riding, as a cure for consumption, is not so totally ineffectual, as is now commonly believed."

On the other hand, it is curious to find a man like Lord Macaulay with the very opposite taste. His riding experiences were most amusing. He was highly timid of horseflesh, a peculiarity which, of course, kept him from venturing on the saddle. Only one instance is given by Trevelyan in his delightful biography of his ever having done so, and that was on the back of a diminutive Sheltie in one of his Scotch tours, while a huge native walked on guard at the bridle rein. Once when he was setting off on a visit to Windsor, and it was intimated to him that a riding-horse as well as a saddle would be at his disposal, he made answer that if the Queen wished him to ride she must send an elephant with a howdah, as he could not undertake to keep his seat on any less secure conveyance.

But Lord Macaulay was not alone in this respect, many of our eminent men of the present century having had little or no taste for this sort of recreation. Some, too, have



been extremely awkward on the saddle. Thus Sydney Smith was no rider, his constant falls causing his family continual anxiety. "I used to think a fall from a horse dangerous," he writes in a letter, "but much experience has convinced me to the contrary. I have had six falls in two years, and just behaved like the three per cents. when they fall—I got up again, and am not a bit the worse for it, any more than the stock in question." But at last he discontinued his riding, and after his amusing fashion gives his reasons, telling us that he was induced to take this resolve for the good of his parish and the peace of his family; for "somehow or other, my horse and I had a habit of parting company. On one occasion I found myself suddenly prostrate in the streets of York, much to the delight of the Dissenters. Another time my horse calmly flung me over his head into a neighbouring parish, as if I had been a shuttlecock, and I felt grateful it was not into a neighbouring planet; but as no harm came of it I might have persevered, perhaps, if, on a certain day, a Quaker tailor from a neighbouring village, to which I had said I was going to ride, had not taken it into his head to call soon after my departure and request to see Mrs. Sydney. She instantly, conceiving I was thrown, if not killed, rushed down to the man, exclaiming,



‘Where is he? Where is your master? Is he hurt?’

“The astonished and gaping snip stood silent from surprise. Still more agitated by his silence, she exclaimed, ‘Is he hurt? I insist upon knowing the worst.’

“Why, please, ma’am, it is only the little bill, a very small account, I wanted to settle,’ replied he, in much surprise. After this I sold my horse.”

His daughter, Lady Holland, tells another amusing anecdote of his unfortunate riding habits. “We were on a visit at Bishopthorpe,” she writes, “and my father had recently preached a visitation sermon, in which, among other things, he had recommended the clergy not to devote too much time to shooting and hunting. The Archbishop, who rode beautifully in his youth, and knew full well my father’s deficiencies in that respect, said, smiling, and evidently much amused, ‘I hear, Mr. Smith, you do not approve of much riding for the clergy.’

“‘Why, my lord,’ said my father, bowing with assumed gravity, ‘perhaps there is not *much objection* provided they do not ride too well, and stick out their toes professionally.’”

And yet Sydney Smith was very fond of his young horses, and they all came running to meet him when he entered the field. He began



their education from their birth; he taught them to wear a girth, a bridle, a saddle, to meet flags and music, to hear the firing of a pistol at their heads, and he maintained that no horses were so well broken-in as his.

Charles Abbot, Lord Tenterden, never mounted a horse throughout the whole course of his life. On being recommended in his old age to take horse-exercise for the sake of his health, he replied "That he certainly should fall off a horse like an ill-balanced sack of corn, as he had never crossed a horse any more than a rhinoceros, and that he had become too stiff and feeble to begin a course of cavaliering. My father," he added, "was too poor to keep a horse, and I was too proud ever to earn sixpence by holding the horse of another."

Paley, in his first attempts to ride, was very far from successful, and had a good many nasty falls. But, possessing plenty of pluck and determination, he made up his mind not to be outdone. Accordingly he persevered in his efforts until he finally succeeded in getting a safe seat on his horse, and in after years he enjoyed many a pleasant ride.

Edward Pellew, Viscount Exmouth, was unskilful as an equestrian, and the story runs that, not daring to cross a horse, he once rode a donkey while reviewing a body of marines. On this occasion,



it is added, he was attended by a favourite negro boy, named after his master, Edward, who, having been made acquainted with the vulgar appellation of the animal on which Lord Exmouth was mounted, innocently observed as he walked by the side of the gallant Admiral and his asinine charger, "Here be three *Neddy*, now, massa!"

In his closing years Lord Eldon used to say, "I left off hunting because I had a fall one day when in full cry on Newcastle Moor. I wished to clear a broad and deep ditch, but my horse fell in and I tumbled over him, when there was a great chance of my being presided over by the Coroner instead of presiding over the House of Lords." But this accident occurred in his boyhood, and although he desisted from following the hounds he was not slow to follow a pretty girl on horseback. A mounted lover, he enjoyed many a stolen interview with Bessie Surtees on the Shields high road, where the young lady was accustomed to ride, followed by an old groom, who was bribed to secrecy by the comely young Oxonian.\* Having, however, in the saddle won Bessie's promise to be his wife, he continued a horseman so far that during his connection with the Northern Circuit he steadily rode the grand tour.

One of his favourite anecdotes referred to his first

\* See Jeaffreson's "Book about Lawyers," i., 152-55.



excursion with the circuiteers. After graphically describing the difficulty he had in procuring horses and equipment for the journey, he used to continue:—"At last I hired a horse for myself and borrowed another for an experienced youth, who was to ride behind me with my saddle-bags. But I thought my chance was gone; for, having been engaged in a discussion with a travelling companion, on approaching the assize town, I looked behind, but there was no appearance of my clerk, and I was obliged to ride back several miles, till I found him crying by the roadside, his horse at some distance from him, and the saddle-bags still further off, and it was not without great difficulty that I could accomplish the reunion which he had in vain attempted. Had I failed, too, in this undertaking I should never have been Lord Chancellor."

Warren Hastings prided himself on his skill in horse-exercise, of which he was specially fond. He rode remarkably well, and prided himself on undertaking some animal which no one else could control, and reducing it to a state of perfect docility. On one occasion, when returning from a ride, he saw some of his young friends striving in vain to manage an ass, which they had found grazing in the paddock, and which one after another they mounted. The ass, it appears, had



left the Peninsula, I bought him, and rode him throughout the rest of the war, and mounted no other horse at Waterloo."

Of the numerous stories told of the eccentric Lord Barrymore, who was fond of horses, it is said that one fine morning he walked out on to the pavement in front of his stables at Newmarket and roared at the top of his voice, "O, yes! O, yes! O, yes! Who wants to buy a horse that can walk five miles an hour, trot eighteen, and gallop twenty?"

As might be expected, a crowd immediately assembled round Lord Barrymore, and on his repeating the flattering announcement there was no lack of aspirants to the possession of this remarkable animal; but they were forced to content themselves with the assurance that "When I see such a horse I will be sure to let you know."

Charles Mathews, added to his love of country life, was fond of his horse-exercise. "During my first engagement in Drury Lane Theatre," he writes, "I lived at Colney Hatch, and in all weathers returned home after the play, about eight miles, and over Finchley Common, in an open carriage. This was from pure love of the country. Four years I lived at Fulham, and paid the same midnight visits, frequently on horseback, to my house, and fourteen years at Kentish Town."



Foote, as is generally known, met with an accident on horseback. While with a party of pleasure along with the Duke of York and some other noblemen, he was thrown from his horse and his leg broken, so that an amputation became necessary, which he endured with uncommon fortitude. In consequence of this accident the Duke obtained for him the patent of the Haymarket Theatre during life. Strange, we are told, as it may appear, with the aid of a cork leg he performed his former characters with no less agility and spirit than he had done before, and continued exhibiting his very laughable pieces, with his more laughable performances, to the most crowded houses.\*

Sir Charles James Napier had a horse like himself, "small, hardy, spirited," and which, to complete the resemblance, had once broken its leg. One day he rode this animal from Limerick to Dublin, between sunrise and sunset—a distance of one hundred and ten miles—neither horse nor horseman appearing fatigued. He was a daring rider, and the more fiery his steed, the better he was pleased, provided it was not vicious.

It was through riding, however, that the world lost the presence of the great novelist Whyte-Melville, who enjoyed his equestrian rambles. As

\* "Percy Anecdotes."



is well known, he met his death through a fall from his horse, whilst galloping across a piece of ploughed land. The sad and painful death, also, of Bishop Wilberforce occurred in a similar way, thus depriving the Anglican Church of one of its most polished and brilliant ornaments.

John Leech was a good horseman, and occasionally found beneficial relief in this mode of exercise, enjoying a long gallop, especially in the hunting field. Josiah Wedgwood was also equally at home on his horse, and up to the last accompanied his daughters in their daily rides. A daily ride was one of Charles Lever's recreations, and many an anecdote is told of his equestrian achievements. He generally rode fast, and with the ease of one who knew how to manage his horse. But sometimes, we are told, he would gratify the curiosity of his admirers by giving them an opportunity of scrutinizing him more closely —

Careless he seems, yet vigilantly shy,  
Wooes the stray glance of ladies passing by,  
While his off-heel insidiously aside  
Provokes the caper which he seems to chide.

But he was addicted to habits which "Nimrod" would hardly approve. He galloped his horse, for instance, on the hardest roads, and his style of riding was, in fact, like his style of writing, as described by *The Thunderer*—"Your blood is on



fire and your pulse on the gallop from the first page to the last."

On one occasion—a very important one—Charles James Mathews was nearly prevented making his first appearance on the stage through an accident when riding. It appears that a private play was organized at the English Opera House—the site of the present Lyceum—in which he was to make his first attempt upon the boards of a theatre.

The news soon got wind, and the "private" play threatened to become almost a public one. Applications for tickets, he tells us in his "Autobiography," "poured in from people of fashion and intellectual celebrities, and days before the event came off not a corner was to be had. Every available seat in boxes, pit, and gallery had been seized upon, and an overflow was expected—no extraordinary circumstance, perhaps, as the tickets were all *given* away. A brilliant and distinguished audience was the consequence, and, as the playbills say, hundreds were turned away from the doors." Lady Morgan, on presenting herself somewhat late, exclaimed: "Why, there's a greater rush here than to see Catalani."

But now for the *contretemps*. "Tomkinson, the pianoforte maker," he adds, "had sold to my



father, for my use, a handsome grey mare, called Dairymaid, formerly a favourite hunter of Charles Young's, from whom he had purchased her, and up to a day or two previous to the evening in question she had conducted herself with the strictest propriety. Unfortunately, however, while I was riding to town with a drawing-board under one arm and a bundle of playbills under the other, the careless Dairymaid stumbled and came upon her knees, pitching me heavily into the road. I escaped only with a sprained ankle." On hearing of the accident Young called upon Tomkinson, and reproached him with being the cause of the disaster.

"Why, Tomkinson, how could you sell that horse to Charles Mathews? You knew she wasn't sound when you sold her."

"Pardon me, Mr. Young," said Tomkinson, in his most pompous manner, "I knew nothing of the sort."

"How can you say that? Why, Tomkinson, the mare wasn't sound when I sold her to *you*."

"More shame for you, Mr. Young," said Tomkinson, walking away in the most dignified manner.

Happily, Mathews pulled himself together for the performance, for, as he says, "the excitement



of the evening dominated all other feelings, and I walked for the time as well as ever."

In his early days Fawcett rode rarely, but after his illness of 1882, when his walking powers somewhat declined, he rode regularly and with great enjoyment. He speaks of the delight of a gallop over the turf which borders the roads round Cambridge. "He had," writes Mr. Leslie Stephen,\* "a perfect passion for a gallop over Newmarket Heath, where there was abundant space and the best of air. He would ride over from Cambridge at Christmas time with a box of sandwiches to provide luncheon on the sunny side of the 'Devil's Ditch.' He loved the chalk down, and often stopped at a cottage to ask for a draught of the sparkling water from the deep wells." Occasionally he came across the harriers, and would then, as his friend, Mr. W. H. Hall, says, "join in our gallops, trusting implicitly to the sagacity of his horse to select the most favourable gaps in our stunted hedgerows."

\* "Life of Henry Fawcett," 62-3.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### ANGLING.

Izaak Walton—Dryden—Sir Charles Bell—John Richardson—  
Sir Humphrey Davy—Turner—Sir Francis Chantrey—John  
Leech—Sir Henry Raeburn—Dean Swift—Archdeacon  
Paley—Canon Kingsley—Lord Nelson—George Herbert  
—Sir Walter Scott—Dr. Wollaston—Goldsmith—Pro-  
fessor Wilson—William Emerson—Theodore Hook—Sir  
John Hawkins—Frank Buckland—Henry Fawcett—  
Daniel Webster—Richard Penn—James Hogg—Sir John  
Barker Mills — Livingstone — Professor Owen — Mark  
Pattison—Matthew Arnold—Lord Westbury—Duke of  
Roxburgh—John Bright.

AN ever-popular diversion, which has been instru-  
mental in affording relief to many a hard-worked  
brain, is angling. Its very surroundings have  
invested it with a quietude and fascination of its  
own, which, from the time of Izaak Walton, have  
not failed to attract men of many minds. Indeed,  
a yet earlier writer, Dennys, “the first angling  
poet,” speaks enthusiastically of the enjoyment he



derived from the scenes in which he practised his art :—

Let them that list these pastimes then pursue  
And on their pleasing fancies feed their fill ;  
So I the fields and meadows green may view,  
And by the rivers fresh may walk at will,  
Among the daisies and the violets blue,  
Red hyacinth, and yellow daffodil,  
Purple narcissus, like the morning rays,  
Pale ganderglas and azor culverkayes.

Dryden's fishing days with his friend Jones, of Ramsbury, were long remembered, and his contempt for the angling powers of one of his literary rivals has been amusingly recorded in Fenton's "Epistle to Thomas Lambard" —

By long experience D'Urfey may, no doubt,  
Ensnare a gudgeon, or sometimes a trout,  
Yet Dryden once exclaimed in partial spite  
"He fish !" because the man attempts to write.

It was the irresistible attractiveness of rambling down a stream with a light rod, and a cast of flies, which endeared angling as an amusement to such a philosopher as Sir Charles Bell, into the practice of which gentle craft he had been originally seduced by his early friend, John Richardson. At first he was a most awkward handler of the rod, but, by diligent practice and perseverance in his drawing-room of an evening, he acquired considerable skill. His carriage, when he made a tour with his wife and his dog, was carefully packed



with all the appliances of his sport, a few chosen volumes, and the unfailing sketch-book. In the heat of the sun the neighbouring tree gave him shade, while he sketched the scenery around, and listened to some favourite author, until a passing cloud enabled him once more to ply the rod with hope of success. This sport so conducted he called his “country house,” and it was assuredly the source of his happiness, as it was of his health.

Lady Bell has thus pleasantly described his fishing life in the neighbourhood of London:—  
“He was often on the water-side before sunrise—indeed, before he could see his flies—and he did enjoy those morning hours. I came down with his breakfast, bringing books and arrangements for passing the whole day, even with cloaks and umbrellas, for no weather deterred us.” After this fashion he enjoyed most of his holiday hours, and writing in vindication of this, his favourite pastime, says:—“Man, I am convinced, enjoys the work of his hands, the adjustment of his tackle, the neatness, fitness, and nicety of the whole apparatus, the study of the flies on the water, the judgment displayed in the adaptation of rod, and line, and fly, to wind, and rain, and fish, and morning and mid-day and evening. These form exactly that gentle exercise of the talents that suits *récreation*.”



Equally enthusiastic as an angler was Sir Humphrey Davy, a recreation which he had followed from his boyhood. In its pursuit he displayed extraordinary zeal and energy, and it was not unusual for him to go two, or three, hundred miles for a day's fishing. His perseverance, too, was remarkable, for, occasionally, he would fish, from early dawn to twilight, in the river Awe, in June, for salmon without raising a fish. But, passionately fond of the beauties of nature, which "he felt as a poet and saw as a philosopher," probably some of the happiest hours of his life were spent by the river or lake side. His angler's attire, writes his brother, was picturesque. "A white low-crowned hat with a broad brim, its under-surface green, as a protection from the sun, garnished, after a few hours' fishing, with various flies of which trial had been made, as was usually the case; a jacket, either grey or green, furnished with numerous large and small pockets for his angling gear; high boots, water-proof for wading, or more commonly laced shoes; and breeches and gaiters, with caps to the knees made of old hats, for the purpose of defence in kneeling by the river-side when he wished to approach near without being seen by the fish."

Turner, the artist, was very fond of fishing, and would angle for hours together, this being



his principal source of relaxation. He seldom paid a country visit without being accompanied by his rod, and he carried into his pursuit the indomitable perseverance which he brought to bear on all his artistic work. No "inclemency of weather, no churlishness of fortune daunted him." It is related by an eye-witness how he used to sit on the lawn of a friend's house, fishing in a pond for carp. On wet days he would sit on a kitchen chair, with a piece of board under his feet, and a large umbrella over his head. However much the wind might blow and the rain descend, there he sat, silent and immovable, until the dinner bell aroused him from what was to him one of the greatest pleasures of his life. On the occasion of a professional visit to Petworth, it was remarked to Lord Egremont, "Turner is going to leave without having done anything; instead of painting, he does nothing but fish." But to the surprise of his patron he produced, as he was on the point of leaving, two or three wonderful pictures, painted with the utmost reserve, during early morning, long before the family were up.

A similar complaint was one day made against Sir Francis Chantrey, who was an ardent angler. "Some of my friends," said he to a friend, "take occasion to rate me on what they term my waste of time in fishing. They little know how rarely



I am idle when thus engaged ; indeed, some of my most successful works have been composed or completed at the river side." Bad weather never restrained him in his rural pastime ; and, so reckless was he of himself, and so considerate for others, that he was seen, in a heavy shower of rain, to take off his macintosh cloak to cover the saddle of a friend's horse who casually fell in with him, while he was fishing, and had dismounted for more easy conversation. He was always alive to a joke, or contrivance, for amusement by getting the start of other anglers.

Thus, on one occasion, he was seen by a bystander to bait his hook with the grey living fly, while others, not knowing they were to be found in the vicinity, were using the artificial ; but the sculptor, having heard of their whereabouts, had despatched a man to bring him some of the live bait, which he used with success, while his companions were trying their fortune with the artificial fly. Then, again, John Leech was fond of angling, and Sir Henry Raeburn was highly proficient in the art, and often went a-trouting in his native streams, for he was a keen lover of nature, and delighted in making long excursions among the distant glens, and romantic woods, of the neighbourhood in which he lived.

One of Swift's outdoor amusements was fishing, and how much enjoyment he derived from it may



be gathered from certain of his letters to his lady friends, wherein he suggests all kinds of arrangements for the summer. They were to go, for instance, and make the Raymonds a visit at Trim, where he would join them in "another eel and trout fishing." On another occasion he urges Esther Johnson and her friend to betake themselves to Trim and tell him of his river, his banks and groves of holly, his apples, and his cherry-trees. Then we are told how "they begin to catch the pikes, and will shortly the trouts, and I would fain know whether the floods were ever so high as to get over the holly bank of the river walk? If so, then all my pikes are gone; but I hope not." Yet, it seems that this amusement was not without its sad side for Swift, as in one of his letters he thus writes:—"I remember when I was a little boy I felt a great fish at the end of my line, which I drew up almost on the ground, but it dropped in, and the disappointment vexes me to this day, and I believe it was the type of all my future disappointments."

Another dignitary of the Church who frequently indulged in angling was Archdeacon Paley. So partial, indeed, was he to this recreation that at one time he kept a journal of his exploits, and afterwards had his portrait taken with a rod and line. Alluding to his success in trowling for pike,



he used to say that the fish, when not very hungry, would sometimes nibble without swallowing the bait, in which case he found it necessary to stimulate its appetite by manœuvring, “for,” added he, “the pike reasons thus, ‘Though I am not hungry now, I may be to-morrow, and therefore must not lose so tempting a prize.’”

But for enthusiasm in angling, few could surpass the late Canon Kingsley, who was in every sense of the word a true sportsman. And in his letters he often refers to the happy, and exciting, hours he spent by the river side. A few weeks’ rest in Ireland, in July of the year 1860, with Mr. Froude, after his multitudinous labours, refreshed him greatly, and from Makree Castle, where he killed his first salmon, a long-coveted experience in life, he writes home :—“I have done the deed at last, killed a real, actual live salmon, over five pounds weight.” On another occasion we find him writing to Tom Hughes and suggesting a trip to Snowden, urging as an inducement for his accompanying him the opportunities they would have for fishing. At last the day was arranged between them, and the following invitation sent, so characteristic of Kingsley :—

Come away with me, Tom,  
Term and talk is done ;  
My poor lads are reaping,  
Busy every one.



Curates mind the parish,  
Sweepers mind the court,  
We'll away to Snowden  
For our ten days' sport.

Fish the August evening  
Till the eve is past,  
Whoop like boys at pounders,  
Fairly played and grassed.

When they cease to dimple,  
Lunge, and swerve, and leap,  
Then up over Siahod  
Choose our nest and sleep.

Some years previous to this time, on his accepting the vacant stall in the Collegiate Church of Middleham, offered him by Dean Wood, he seems to have been charmed with the scenery, and the opportunities for angling which it would afford him. Accordingly, he thus wrote to his wife:—"What a delight it would be to take you up Coverdale, just half-a-mile off, at the back of the town. You know those lovely river scenes of Creswick's; they are exact likenesses of little Cover in his deep wooded glen, with his yellow rocks, and bright white stones, and brown water clearer than crystal. As for fishing, I am a clod; never did I see or hear of such tackle as these men use, finer than our finest. Squire Topham considers my tackle as only fit to hold cart horses." Once more, apart from the enjoyment of open-air sports, Kingsley encouraged them in the young as



a safeguard. Writing to an old friend, he says : —“I am bringing up my children as naturalists, my boy as both naturalist, and sportsman. And then, whether he goes into the army, or emigrates, he will have a pursuit to keep him from cards and brandy-pawnee, horse-racing, and the pool of hell.”

But among further illustrious devotees to this animating recreation in past times may be mentioned no less a name than Nelson's, who, when leisure permitted, beguiled the hours with this fascinating pastime. The following well-known little anecdote, recorded by Sir Walter Scott, from the letter of a friend, whilst proving Nelson's kindly nature, is interesting from the allusion made by him to his old fishing days. “I was,” says the correspondent, “at the Naval Hospital at Yarmouth on the morning when Nelson, after the battle of Copenhagen (having sent the wounded before him), arrived at the Roads and landed on the jetty. The populace soon surrounded him, and the military were drawn up in the market-place ready to receive him; but, making his way through the crowd, he went straight to the hospital. I went round the wards with him, and was much interested in observing his demeanour to the sailors; he stopped at every bed, and to every man he had something kind and



cheering to say. At length, he stopped opposite a bed on which a sailor was lying, who had lost his right arm close to the shoulder joint, and the following short dialogue passed between them:—

“Nelson : ‘Well, Jack, what’s the matter with you?’”

“Sailor : ‘Lost my right arm, your honour.’”

“Nelson paused, looked down at his own empty sleeve, then at the sailor, and said playfully—

“‘Well, Jack, then you and I are spoiled for fishermen. Cheer up, my brave fellow.’”

One reason, it has been asserted, of the popularity of angling, is that it allows a man the same degree of half-idleness as the fair sex find in their needlework, or knitting; which, while employing the hands, leaves the mind at liberty. Hence literary men have always found it a highly congenial mode of amusement. George Herbert, for example, was an angler, and Sir Walter Scott, amidst his other pastimes, found pleasure at times in “the drowsy watching of the immersion of a cork and a quill, with almost all his ideas confined to baits of lob-worms, and live maggots.” But, he writes, “although we have wetted a line in our time, we are far from boasting of more than a very superficial knowledge of the art, and possess no part whatever of the scientific information which is necessary to constitute the philosophical angler.”



Lockhart has a lively sketch of his appearance when one day, at Abbotsford, he joined Sir Walter Scott in a coursing match. "His fisherman's costume—a brown hat with flexible brim, surrounded with lino upon line, and innumerable fly-hooks, jack boots worthy of a Dutch smuggler, and a (green) fustian surtout dabbled with the blood of salmon—made a fine contrast with the smart jackets, white cord breeches, and well-polished jockey boots of the less distinguished cavaliers about him."

How thoroughly in harmony Sir Walter Scott was with the angler's life, may be gathered from the following lines :—

Along the silver streams of Tweed,  
'Tis blithe the mimic fly to lead,  
When to the hook the salmon springs,  
And the line whistles through the rings.  
The boiling eddy see him try,  
Then dashing from the current high,  
Till watchful eye and cautious hand  
Have led his wasted strength to land.

It was through Sir Humphrey Davy's influence that Dr. Wollaston became an angler—and an enthusiastic one—a graceful tribute to whose memory he has given in his little work, entitled "*Salmonia ; or, Days of Fly-fishing,*" written somewhat on the plan of his favourite author, Izaak Walton's, "*Complete Angler*":—"There was—alas, that I must say 'there was'—an



illustrious physician who was nearly of the age of fifty before he made angling a pursuit, yet he became a distinguished fly-fisher, and the amusement occupied many of his leisure hours during the last twelve years of his life. He, indeed, applied his pre-eminent acuteness, his science, and his philosophy to aid the resources, and exalt the pleasures, of this amusement. I remember to have seen Dr. Wollaston, a few days after he had become a fly-fisher, carrying at his button-hole a piece of india-rubber, when, by passing his silkworm link through a fissure in the middle, he rendered it straight, and fit for immediate use."

Byron fished, but called the sport "a solitary vice," condemning its advocate and apologist, Izaak Walton, as "a quaint old cruel coxcomb," who—

In his gullet  
Should have a hook, and a small trout to pull it.

This somewhat severe stricture on Walton, however, is not surprising, for it has been observed, that scarce anything could "have been less suited to Byron's eager and active temper, and restless and rapid imagination, than a pastime in which proficiency is only to be acquired by long and solitary practice."

In addition to his convivial social sports, it would seem that Goldsmith occasionally varied



them with the "cheerful solitude" of a day's angling, judging, at any rate, from a spirited passage in the "Animated Nature" (v. 157), wherein he breaks out :—"Happy England ! where the sea furnishes an abundant and luxurious repast, and the fresh waters an innocent and harmless pastime ; where the angler, in cheerful solitude, strolls by the edge of a stream, and fears neither the coiled snake nor the lurking crocodile ; where he can retire at night, with his few trouts, to borrow the pretty description of old Walton, to some friendly cottage, where the landlady is good, and the daughter innocent and beautiful ; where the room is cleanly, with lavender in the sheets, and twenty ballads stuck about the wall. There he can enjoy the company of a talkative brother sportsman, have his trouts dressed for supper, tell tales, sing old tunes, or make a catch."

Such a delightful picture could only have been drawn by a man who had some love for, and knowledge of, the scene he so charmingly depicts. Anyhow, it was one which Professor Wilson most thoroughly appreciated, enthusiastic angler as he was from his boyhood. To him, in truth, this sport was a perfect passion, as may be judged from his own words, uttered in his closing years : "How in youth and prime of manhood I used to



gallop to the glens, like a deer, over a hundred heathery hills, to devour the dark rolling river or the blue, breezy loch! How leaped my heart to hear the thunder of the nearing waterfall! And lo! yonder flows, at last, the long, dim, shallow, rippling, hazel-banked line of music among the broomy braes, all astir with back-fins on its surface. And now the *feed is on*, teeming with swift-shooting, bright-bounding, and silver-shining scaly life, most beauteous to behold at every soft alighting of the deceptive line, captivating and irresistible even among a shower of natural leaf-born flies, a swarm in the air from the mountain woods."

It was the memory of such a picture which kindled within him in his closing year somewhat of the old passion; and on one occasion he might have been seen with slow and unsteady step, supported on the one hand by his stick, while the other carries the rod. Yet into the water he goes, up to the ankles, then up to the knees, tottering every other step, but never falling. Trout after trout he catches, until weary he is obliged to rest on the bank, sitting with his feet in the water, and laughing at his daughter's horror. And yet he did not suffer from these imprudent liberties. Professor Wilson's feats were not unlike those of William Emerson, the mechanical philosopher,



who was devoted to angling, and while thus amusing himself would stand up to his middle in the water for several hours. His biographer further tells us that when he was building a house, upon the small farm, which he possessed by the side of the Tees, he never hesitated to plunge into the water for the purpose of collecting stones from the bed of the river. He was suffering at the time from some slight gouty symptoms, and, according to an eccentric notion, he maintained that wading was beneficial to him, because the water sucked the gout out of his legs.

One favourite employment of a day with Theodore Hook was a sauntering excursion up the Thames, accompanied by a single friend. Ditton was not unfrequently the resort, the attractions of which were these —

Give me a punt, a rod and line,  
A snug arm-chair to sit on,  
Some well-iced punch and weather fine,  
And let me fish at Ditton.

These days were generally marked with much good-natured merriment and fun, for Theodore Hook could not fail to be entertaining.

Sir John Hawkins, again, as he wandered by the rippling stream, with rod in hand, was able to indulge in his musical fancies. And James Watt, it is said, occasionally resorted to the same



recreation "when confinement, or over-application, to study had rendered a slight and temporary relaxation necessary to his constitution."\*

Frank Buckland, a true lover of nature in all her moods, and an ardent fisherman, has given in his usually humorous, and graphic, manner a jack-fishing adventure on the Avon. "We came down," he writes, "the incline into Salisbury by the express train at a fearful pace; round the curves, over the embankment, we fled with a speed that took one's breath away, and dashed into the station like a comet." On the morrow the party were to start for a special preserve, and "the great cans with the bait, the rods, luncheon, tackle, etc., were all placed in the landlord's four-wheeler, and in we jumped.

" 'I will drive,' said Pennell. 'All right behind! Let go!'

"The ostler let go, but not an inch would our noble steed proceed. She put back her ears, shook her head, and made an attempt to kick, foiled, however, by the kicking strap. The ostler then tried persuasion, but it was of no use; then the coachman touched her with the whip, and we were off at last. We had not gone ten yards before the mare turned all of a sudden right round into the shafts, and ended by kicking. Out

\* See Muirhead's "Life of James Watt," 1859, 26.



went the landlord, and ostler, from behind, the coachman and myself from in front, but happily no one was hurt, the mare having fallen on her side with a crash.

“Walking back to the hotel, another horse was put into a borrowed dog-cart, and we had just got to the place of the former accident when the shafts began to elevate their noses in a most unpleasant way.

“‘Out with you, gentlemen,’ said the landlord, ‘or we shall be over again.’

“So we all jumped off like artillery-men from a gun carriage.

“‘Is this what you call going out jack-fishing, Pennell?’ said I.

“‘Never mind,’ he added; ‘let’s go into the garden and catch more bait.’

“At last a fair start was made, and the Mill was reached, where the keeper was awaiting our arrival. And so, the danger of the road over, the party commenced their angling operations.”\*

The remark of Izaak Walton, that angling is something like poetry—“Men are to be born so”—seems to have been exemplified in the case of Henry Fawcett, who was a fisherman from his childhood. Whenever he could spare a few hours his delight was to run down to Salisbury, where

\* “Curiosities of Natural History,” 3rd S., 144-149.



many friends gave him opportunities for gratifying his inclinations. Elsewhere, too, he was always welcome, for Lord Normanton offered him salmon-fishing at Ibbesley, on the Avon, between Ringwood and Christchurch, and Lord Nelson gave him trout and jack-fishing in the Avon below. In the summer he frequently visited Scotland, where he was entertained by his old friend Mr. Bass, at Glen Tulchan, on the Spey. These trips were thoroughly enjoyed by Fawcett, one of their charms being, he used to say, that they brought him into easy, and friendly, intercourse with men in a humble position of life. It may be truly said that few men entered more minutely into everything connected with the sport than he did, and his hearty enjoyment of a rough drive in a donkey cart full of fish, along a road in Wales, in 1879, is an additional proof of his genial good humour.

It has also been said that most anglers have been lovers of the country, their occupation causing them to ramble among the most beautiful and romantic spots, a growing love and attraction for which is soon cultivated in them. Daniel Webster was not only an angler, but a lover of nature; and who, after reading some of Gay's charming lines, can doubt his fondness for rural scenes?

Few persons knew more about fishing in all its



branches than Richard Penn, who was "connected with that *Penn* who the witty and beautiful Duchess of Gordon, with more point than politeness, declared was a *pen* often cut, but never mended." "I once had the good fortune to pass a day with him at his fishing quarters in Hampshire," writes Lord William Lennox; \* "a spot that would have delighted old Izaak Walton, and was charmed with my visit. The Rev. Edward Cannon, and Richard Barham, author of '*Ingoldsby Legends*,' were of the party, and those, who did not attempt to throw a fly, were kept in a state of merriment by the witty sayings of these two. Upon this occasion Cannon was appointed caterer, Barham and myself furnishing the wine and spirits, Richard Penn all the fish he caught. To make assurance doubly sure, our reverend caterer ordered a fine Wood Mill salmon from Southampton, so as to ensure a dish of fish, which, with lamb chops and kidneys, sent up 'hot and hot,' and a lobster, furnished a repast worthy of Heliogabalus."

James Hogg was one of the keenest and most skilful sportsmen in Scotland, especially as an angler. "He would stroll up the Yarrow as far as its junction with the Loch," writes a correspondent of the *Athenæum*, "walk in up to the

\* "*Recollections from 1806-1873*," ii., 81.



middle so as to reach a scientific distance from the shore, and thus wade round till he again joined the stream on the left bank, and returned down the river" to his house called Mount Bengier.

Although he suffered martyrdom from gout, Sir John Barker Mills was fond of fishing, and was an excellent angler. After every attack of his old enemy he would, as soon as he was a little better, with the assistance of a stick, or an attendant, hobble into the meadow through which the river Test runs near to his residence, Mottisfont Abbey, where mostly he caught, besides fish, a cold, and the gout to follow, which laid him up again for months.

In his early life Livingstone was an angler, and occasionally, it has been said, was guilty of poaching. If a salmon came in his way, for instance, while he was fishing for trout, he made no scruple of bagging it. The bag on such occasions was not always made for the purpose, writes Dr. Blaikie,\* for there is a story that once when he had captured a fish in the "Salmon Pool," and was not prepared to transport such a prize, he deposited it in the leg of his brother Charles's trousers, creating no little sympathy for the boy, as he passed through the village, with his sadly-swollen leg!

Professor Owen used to relate the following

\* "David Livingstone," 12-13.



amusing anecdote which occurred in a Club of some of the working scientific men of London, who occasionally sallied forth to have a day's fishing. A small river in the neighbourhood of the Metropolis was taken; and, at a little public-house, dinner was served sparingly on such food as old Izaak Walton loved. It was an established rule that he who caught the biggest fish of the day should be the president for the evening. "In the course of one day," writes Professor Owen, "a member, not a scientific man, but a high political man, caught a trout that weighed  $3\frac{1}{2}$  lbs.; but earlier in the day he had pulled out a barbel of half-a-pound weight. So while we were on our way to the inn, what did this gentleman do but ram the barbel down the trout's throat, in which state he handed the fish to be weighed. Thus he scored four pounds, which being the greatest weight, he took the chair. Presently the President of the Royal Society said to the owner of the fish —

" 'If you don't want that fine fish of yours, I should like to have it, for I have some friends to dine with me to-morrow.'

" Accordingly he took it home, but in the following week, while we were preparing our tackle, the President of the Royal Academy said to our political friend —

" 'There were some very extraordinary circum-



stances, do you know, about that fish you gave me. I had no idea that the trout was so voracious, but that one had swallowed a barbel.'

" 'I am astonished to hear your lordship say so,' rejoined an eminent naturalist. 'Trout may be voracious enough to swallow minnows—but a barbel, my lord! There must be some mistake.'

" 'Not at all,' replied his lordship, 'for the fact got to my family that the cook, in cutting open the throat, had found a barbel inside; and as my family knew I was fond of natural history, I was called into the kitchen. There I saw the trout had swallowed a barbel, full half-a-pound weight.'

" 'Out of the question, my lord,' said the naturalist; 'it's altogether quite unscientific and unphilosophical.'

" 'I don't know what may be philosophical in the matter, I only know I am telling you a matter of fact,' said his lordship.

" And the dispute having lasted awhile, explanations were given, and the practical joke was heartily enjoyed."

Mark Pattison was an angler. Speaking of his Oxford worries at the period of 1852-3, he tells us in his "Memoirs" that what was in the end more useful to him than any honours, and employments, were long fishing excursions which he was in the



habit of making in the North of England and Scotland. "Since my boyish days," he says, "I had dropped out of fishing—forgotten its charms; and, during the fever of Tractarianism, had not felt the want of its gently soothing properties. Fortunately, a year or two back the fly-rod had accidentally come into my hands; it was now precisely the resource of which my wounded nature stood in need. I arranged the classes of private pupils for Lent and Michaelmas terms only, keeping the summer term free. About the middle of April, after long and anxious preparations of rods and tackle, with a well-selected box of books, and large store of tobacco, I set out for the North. My first stage was Hauxwell, from which I fished the Ure or Swale; then passed on to the Eden; then up the Border, fishing everywhere where I could get leave—all the way to the Bridge of Tummel in Perthshire. This humble inn, kept by simple and friendly people, became my home for many weeks at a time." In this way he made lengthened excursions, and it was not until he became sufficiently tired of idleness, or satiated with solitude, that he thought of returning home.

Another keen angler was Matthew Arnold, and Sir John Millais, writing to the *Fishing Gazette*, says:—"He was my guest at Birnam Hall, on



the Tay, in 1866, and was on the water from morning till there was no more light to fish. I was in the boat with him when he killed two fresh run grilse (casting), and I never shall forget his delight and the pride with which he told me they were the largest fish which he had ever caught. The run of water which afforded him so much pleasure had no name, so I have since christened it 'Arnold's Stream.' "

Among further anglers may be mentioned Lord Westbury. As a young man, his love of the river induced him to rent a farmhouse at Marlow during the summer months in 1828. He would turn out at daybreak to examine his lines, or to snare the jack which the floods, of the previous winter, had left in the neighbouring ditches. When the long vacation brought its leisure he would spend whole days, on the river, with his little party of friends to see who would hook most perch or gudgeon.\*

The late Duke of Roxburgh was a famous angler. From the early age of eight, at which he killed his first salmon, he pursued his favourite recreation in all parts of the world where the salmon is known to be found. As a proof of his skill, as a fisherman, it may be stated that when eighteen years of age he had caught in the Tweed ten salmon, by wading, before breakfast, and, ere the

\* "Life of Lord Westbury," T. A. Nash, i., 51.



day was over, he had killed twenty-five grilse and salmon. In legislation on the salmon preservation system, the Duke of Roxburgh took a conspicuous and active part, having, at his own expense, brought into Parliament and passed a Bill for the abolition of staked nets, and killing unfair fish in enclosed water.\*

And then there was John Bright, who, as everyone knows, took a keen interest in fishing. After the labours of his political life, there was no pleasure he enjoyed so much as visiting the Tweed in his angler's attire. He was a thorough fisherman. In one of his letters he says :—" I was only four days on the Tweed. The river was too low for Mr. ——'s water, but we had two days on the ——'s water. Wednesday and Thursday, a fortnight ago, we fished by turns. I began, and when I got a fish, then Mr. —— took the rod, and when he got one, I fished again. Wednesday we got six fish. Mine were three—25lbs., 21lbs., and 17lbs." But, whether in the House of Commons, or by the river-side, his ever-welcome, and respected, appearance will long be missed, and not easily replaced.

\* Baily's *Magazine of Sports and Pastimes*, 1869, 171.



## CHAPTER IX.

### WALKING.

Sir W. Hamilton—Sir Rowland Hill—Wordsworth—Robert Stephenson—Charles Dickens—Charles Lamb—John Dalton—Swift—Southey—Keats—Sir Walter Scott—Macready—Samuel Rogers—Wm. Cowper—Charles J. Fox—Prof. Wilson—Wm. Hutton—Henry Fawcett—Edward Miall—Archbishop Whately—Henry Kirke White—Lord Hatherly—Lord Chief Justice Denman—Vice-Chancellor Shadwell—Thomas Stothard—Faraday—Horatio Ross—John Metcalf.

As one of the healthiest and most pleasant recreations, walking has from the earliest period been justly in repute. Hence it has not failed to find enthusiastic advocates among the great and learned of all countries, who, seeking this mode of repose in their leisure hours, have fully realized —

The elastic spring of an unwearied foot,  
That play of lungs, inhaling and again  
Respiring freely the fresh air, that makes  
Swift pace or steep ascent no toil.



Thus, a walk into the country was frequently with Sir William Hamilton a means of well-earned relief after his intense and long-continued study. On such an occasion he would have a companion ; but, occasionally falling into a fit of mental abstraction, he would walk considerably in advance, or on the opposite side of the road, perhaps repeating aloud to himself some Greek, Latin, or English verses, quite unconscious of what he was sending forth. It often happened that some ladies who met him and his friend returning, in this eccentric fashion, from their stroll, would naturally inquire “ whether the two had fallen out on the way ? ”

As a walker, Sir Rowland Hill was noted from his boyhood, and in this way he chiefly made his excursions. “ I walked to Stourbridge once a week to give a lesson,” he records in his journal. “ This I could do without the least fatigue, as it is only twelve miles from hence, and I have often walked upwards of thirty miles in one day.” Indeed, his fondness for feats led him, he said, to hazard his health ; and once, in a walk of five-and-twenty miles in a hilly country, he finished the last mile on the run.

Equally famous for his pedestrian feats was Wordsworth, who, in the course of his rambles, must have travelled a distance of about one



hundred and eighty thousand miles—"a mode of exertion which, to him, stood in the stead of wine, spirits, and all other stimulants to the animal spirits, to which he has been indebted for a life of unclouded happiness, and even for much of what is most excellent in his writings." And yet, useful as they proved themselves, Wordsworth's legs, writes De Quincey, "were certainly not ornamental, having been condemned by every female connoisseur;" adding, "It was really a pity that he had not another pair for evening-dress parties, when no boots lend their friendly aid to mask our imperfections from the eyes of female rigourists—the *elegantes formarum spectatrices*." It was fortunate, however, for Wordsworth that his legs, despite their awkward appearance, were beyond the average standard of human requisition.

Robert Stephenson was another great walker, and during the construction of the London and Birmingham line might often have been seen walking from point to point, at such a pace that his companions, puffing at his heels, were frequently compelled to cry out for breathing time. On one occasion, too, when in America, he determined to see a little of the country, and to pay a visit to Canada, before crossing the Atlantic for Great Britain. Accordingly, with a small party



of friends, he set out on a pedestrian excursion from New York, over the border, to Montreal. But, whether as a recreation, or in the pursuit of business, walking was a source of pleasure to him, and harmonized with the activity of his character.

Charles Dickens was never happy unless he had his accustomed walks, and many an amusing anecdote, he has left behind, of incidents which befell him in the course of his pedestrian trips. For the disorder, too, of sleeplessness, from which he suffered, he adopted the treatment of getting up directly after lying down, going out, and coming home tired at sunrise. "My last special feat was turning out of bed at two, after a hard day, pedestrian and otherwise, and walking thirty miles into the country to breakfast." In this way, he acquired his experience of tramps and low life, his sketches of which are perfect of their kind.

Thus the papers which he began in the year 1860, in "All the Year Round," under the title of "The Uncommercial Traveller," will always be specially interesting from their personal tone. "I am both a town traveller and a country traveller, and am always on the road. Figuratively speaking, I travel for the great house of Human-interest Brothers, and have a rather large connection in the fancy goods way. Literally speaking, I am always wandering here and there from my rooms



in Covent Garden, London—now about the city streets, now about the country by-roads, seeing many little things, and some great things, which, because they interest me, I think may interest others.” Yes! Dickens was an habitual walker, and was often encountered in the oddest places and most inclement weather, in Ratcliff Highway, on Haverstock Hill, on Camberwell Green, in Gray’s Inn Lane, at Hammersmith Broadway, and at Kensal New Town.\* “A hansom whirled you by the Bell and Horns at Brompton,” writes Mr. Sala, in the *Daily Telegraph*, June, 1870, “and there he was striding, as with seven-league boots, seemingly in the direction of North End, Fulham. The Metropolitan Railway sent you forth to Lisson Grove, and you met him plodding speedily towards the Yorkshire stingo. He was to be met rapidly skirting the grim brick wall of the prison in Coldbath Fields, or trudging along the Seven Sisters Road, at Holloway, or bearing under a steady press of sail underneath Highgate Archway, or pursuing the even tenor of his way up the Vauxhall Bridge Road.”

But he overdid his walking, and in the year 1865, he first had the attack in his left foot which materially disabled his walking-power for the rest of his life. This he attributed to over-walking in the

\* Forster’s “Life of Charles Dickens,” iii., 476.



snow, and in a letter dated 21st February he thus writes :—"I got frost-bitten by continually walking in the snow, and getting wet in the feet daily. My boots hardened and softened, my left foot swelled, and I still forced the boot on; sat in it to write half the day, walked in it through the snow the other half; forced the boot on again next morning, sat and walked again, and being accustomed to all sorts of changes in my feet, took no heed. At length, going out as usual, I fell lame on the walk, and had to limp home dead lame through the snow, for the last three miles, to the remarkable terror, by-the-bye, of the two big dogs."

Charles Lamb was, in some respects, not unlike Dickens in his walking powers, for he frequently traversed the whole of London and its suburbs on foot. One inducement, perhaps, was his extreme liking for the city, which, with its bustle, and its living throngs of men and women, its shops, its turns and windings, the cries and noises of trade and life, he loved beyond all other things. Fond, too, of books, it was his habit on his return home from Leadenhall Street, as soon as his humble meal was over, to stroll along those streets where the old bookshops were to be found. Indeed, he was restless, and as he one day remarked, "I cannot sit and think." It was well



that he avoided doing so by allowing his mind to dwell on the sights, and objects, which he saw around him as he sauntered from street to street.

Many an hour, again, John Stuart Mill spent in walking, and at one time, he tells us, in his "Autobiography," he passed most Sundays, throughout the year, taking long rural walks on that day even when residing in London. Part of his holiday, too, was spent in tours, chiefly pedestrian, with one or more companions, a mode of travelling which allowed him to gratify his taste for country life, and scenery.

It was also in walking exercise that John Dalton, the discoverer of the atomic theory, delighted. One of his chief pleasures, to which he regularly looked forward, was to visit the hills of Cumberland, where he first studied the clouds and the Aurora. And when the usual day in June had come, old Matthew Jobson came out of his cottage under the slopes of Helvellyn, and looked out for Dalton and his instruments. He made this ascent from thirty to forty times in his life, ever walking rapidly and with ease, generally keeping before any party who accompanied him, so as on one occasion to have caused a friend to exclaim, "John, I wonder what thy legs are made of?" He never wearied. Jonathan Otley, an old veteran guide at Keswick, and who had spent the



greater part of his life in mapping, describing and showing the country around, often accompanied Dalton in his walking expeditions, interesting accounts of which he has entered in his journal.

With Swift, walking was a necessary recreation, without which, he affirmed, he could not exist at all. He walked to make himself lean, he said, in describing his long walks with Prior, and his fellow-poet walked to try and make himself fat. Irish women could not abide walking, he would add, and that was why he disliked them. He always cried shame at them, as if their legs were of no use but to be laid aside.

“At your time of life,” he wrote in his declining years to Pope, “I could have leapt over the moon;” and his “walks like lightning” in the parks between London and Chelsea, and in the Windsor Avenues, are prominent in his journals. In these, too, he mentions a design he had, on leaving for Ireland, after he obtained the Deanery, to “walk it” all the way to Chester, his man and himself, by ten miles a day. “It will do my health a great deal of good, and I shall do it in fourteen days.” One special walk of his earlier years, adds Mr. Forster,\* also recorded there as if not unfrequently taken, was from Farnham to London, a distance of thirty-eight miles.

\* “Life of Swift,” 1875, i., 101-2.



Then there was Southey, who, in his walks, found relief from ill-health caused by his sedentary habits, and intense mental application, and that anxiety about his "ways and means," which followed him through life, from the various relations who were wholly, or chiefly, dependent on him.

Many of his letters contain the most charming accounts of his pedestrian tours, showing how thoroughly he appreciated these holiday trips. According to his son, his greatest relaxation was "in a mountain excursion or a picnic by one of the lakes, tarns, or streams; and these parties, of which he was the life and soul, will long live in the recollections of those who shared them. An excellent pedestrian (thinking little of a walk of twenty miles when upwards of sixty), he usually headed the 'infantry' on these occasions, looking on those gentlemen as idle mortals who indulged in the luxury of a mountain pony," yet these excursions, he adds, "began in later life to wear to him something of a melancholy aspect. So many friends were dead who formerly shared them, and his own domestic hopes were but too vividly called to mind with the remembrance of former days of enjoyment, the very grandeur of the scenery around many of the chosen places brought back sad memories, and these parties became, in time, so painful that



it was with difficulty he could be prevailed upon to join in them." \*

Keats has left in his letters an amusing description of a walking tour through the lakes and highlands with his friend Brown, which was an agreeable diversion to his somewhat prosaic and monotonous life. They started from Lancaster on foot, and his friend has recorded the rapture of Keats when he became sensible, for the first time, of the full effect of mountain scenery. At a turn of the road above Bowness, where the Lake of Windermere first bursts on the view, he stopped as if stupefied with beauty. It was on this occasion that he wrote, on visiting Dumfries, a sonnet on Burns, while staying in a whisky-shop, into which the cottage where Burns was born had been converted.

Afterwards the pedestrians passed by Solway Firth, through that delightful part of Kircudbrightshire, the scene of "Guy Mannering." Keats had never read the novel, but was much struck with the character of Meg Merrilies as delineated to him by his companion. He seemed at once to realize the creation of the novelist, and suddenly stopping in the pathway, at a point where a profusion of honeysuckle, wild rose, and foxglove mingled with the brambles and broom that filled up the

\* "Life and Correspondence," vi., 10, 12, 13.



space between the shattered rocks, he cried out, "Without a shadow of doubt on that spot has old Meg Merrilies often boiled her kettle." It may be remembered, too, that Sir Walter Scott was fond of walking and riding, and his son-in-law and biographer, John Lockhart, has given a charming little picture of his domestic life in this respect: "On Sunday he never rode—at least not until his growing infirmity made his pony almost necessary to him—for it was his principle that all domestic animals have a full right to their Sabbath of rest; but, after he had read the church service, he usually walked with his whole family, dogs included, to some favourite spot at a considerable distance from the house—most probably the ruined tower of Elibank—and there dined with them in the open air on a basket of cold provisions, mixing his wine with the water of the brook, beside which they all were grouped around him on the turf."

In his "Reminiscences," Macready has left us a charming picture of a pedestrian tour he made in the Highlands, and of the many places of interest he visited in the course of it, amongst them being one of those places of pilgrimage alluded to by the Palmer in "Marmion" as —

St. Fillan's blessed well,  
Whose spring can frenzied dreams dispel,  
And the crazed brain restore.



Reaching the summit of Balquhiddar, "What a burst of beauty on my sight was there! The sun was not yet below the hills, and under its sloping rays Loch Katrine lay before me like a sheet of molten gold in a framework of mountain, wood, rock, and shrub, intermingled and disposed as if in one of nature's happiest moments of design. The effect of this glorious view upon me was most extraordinary; wine could not have produced such instantaneous and wonderful exhilaration. I was really enraptured by it —

"Sound needed none,  
Nor any voice of joy; my spirit drank  
The spectacle."

The graphic account Macready gives of the Highland cottage, where he put up for the night, — when he was thoroughly wearied out — is most enticing, and is sufficient to make many a pedestrian long for the leisure days of summer months, when he can betake himself to the same lovely locality. Anxious to get housed for the night, he inquired of a stout-looking peasant if he could give him shelter. "Oh," he replied, "you southern gentlemen think a poor Highlander can't give you a bed; but you shall have a bed, and blankets too, and sheets too, which ever you like best; walk in, sir."

Accordingly Macready walked in, and, after



about a quarter of an hour's conversation, "he went out and returned with a bottle, from which he poured me a bumper of the cordial beverage—a nectarean draught to my chilly frame—real mountain dew. After some time a servant lassie laid a clean table cloth, spoons, knives, and soup-plates on the table; and whilst I was wondering,—with the fear of a haggis present to me—what our supper was to consist of, a large basin covered over was brought in, which, to my great contentment, proved full of mashed potatoes, prepared *à merveille*. This, with rich new milk poured over it, gave me a supper, the relish of which I can well remember. Cheese and oatcake, with whisky-toddy, crowned the delicious repast." Such an experience, indeed, may well have refreshed and delighted the great tragedian.

The accident which deprived Samuel Rogers of the power of locomotion was the severest of trials to a man of his active habits, and extraordinary strength, for he delighted in walking, and thought his health depended upon the exercise he took in this way. Indeed, how acutely Rogers felt the effects of his accident may be gathered from the following incident:—

One day, the bell ringing between six and seven, when he was just going to dinner, he desired his old servant Edmund to say "Not at home."



“Who was it?” he inquired.

E.—“Colonel ——, sir.”

R.—“And who is Colonel ——?”

E.—“The gentleman who upset you, sir, and caused your accident.”

R.—“It is an agreeable recollection. Did he come to refresh it?”

E.—“Oh! sir, he calls very often to inquire for you.”

R.—“Does he? Then if he calls again don’t tell me of it.”

The officer in question was the innocent cause of the mishap, for as his brougham was passing at an ordinary pace, Rogers, who was about to cross, suddenly checked himself, lost his balance, and fell with his hip against the kerbstone.

A further touching little incident is given by one of his lady friends: “When I first saw him after his accident I found him lying on his bed, which was drawn near the bedroom window that he might look upon the park. Taking my hand, he kissed it, and I felt a tear drop on it, and that was all the complaint or regret that he ever expressed. Never did he allude to it to me, nor, I believe, to anyone.”

Walking was in a measure a necessity to Cowper, because he rarely rode. Writing, on one occasion, to his friend and fellow Templar,



Mr. Clotworthy Rowley, he says : “ I am leading an idle, and, therefore, what is to me a most agreeable life ; nor do I envy you the country, dirty as it now is, and daily deluged with unseasonable rain. Sometimes I go into the adjacent parts of the country to visit a friend or a lady ; but it is a short journey, and such as may easily be performed on foot, or in a hired carriage, for never, unless compelled to do it, do I mount a horse, because I have a tender skin, which with a little exercise of that kind suffers sorely.” In the course, too, of his correspondence he alludes to his evening walks with his friend, Joseph Hill, mentioning how much pleasure their remembrance afforded him.

Charles James Fox prided himself on his endurance as a pedestrian, and on the steadiness of pace which enabled him, almost infallibly, to calculate the distance that he traversed by the time that he spent over it. The friends of his later life, writes Sir George Trevelyan, could not please him better than by disputing whether this or that village was nine or eleven miles from St. Anne’s Hill, in order to give him the opportunity of solving the problem by a walk. When a lad at Oxford he trudged the fifty-six miles between Hertford College and Holland House in the course of a summer’s day, and only broke the



journey for a lunch of bread and cheese, and porter, in payment for which, observing the usual proportion between the market value of his pleasures, and the price that they had cost him, he left his gold watch in pawn with the innkeeper.

Perhaps one of the most remarkable walkers was Professor Wilson, or as he is better known under his familiar pseudonym of "Christopher North." He possessed a fine physique, and this, coupled with a strong activity of character, impelled him at times to perform the most extraordinary feats. Thus the Burns Festival was an occasion which inspired him with enthusiasm, and induced him to walk seventy miles to be present at a meeting, which he "electrified with a new and peculiar fervour of eloquence, such as had never been heard before." Unfortunately his daughter, in her "Memoir" of his life, regrets having been unable to gather many authentic anecdotes of his walking powers, but subjoins the following valuable note from her brother:—

"I have often heard him mention the following. He once walked forty miles in eight hours, but when, or where, he did it I cannot recollect. On another occasion he walked from Liverpool to Elleray within the four-and-twenty hours—somewhere about eighty miles. You are correct about



his walking from Kelso to Edinburgh, forty miles, to attend a public dinner. Once, when disappointed in getting a place in the mail from Penrith to Kendal, he gave his coat to the driver, set off on foot, reached Kendal some time before the coach, and then trudged on to Elleray."

Another walker who may be compared with Christopher North was William Hutton, of Birmingham, who always considered his walking power a test of his vitality. It was his conviction that, as soon as he ceased to walk, his life would close—a belief, indeed, which was realized, for he died in his ninety-second year, pathetically exclaiming, when his end drew near—

"I am got to my last, I cannot walk another step."

According to his daughter, her father, at the age of seventy-nine, was a prodigy in strength, and adds that in his eighty-third year he one day walked thirty-two miles, and on the next eighteen. In his diary, too, he makes this entry:—"At the age of eighty-two I consider myself a young man. I could, without much fatigue, walk forty miles a day; but, during the last six years, I have felt a sensible decay, and, like a stone rolling down the hill, the velocity increases with the progress. The strings of the instrument are, one after another, giving way, never to be brought into tune."



But the closing entry in his diary shows that for some years to come some of the old vital strength was to remain in him : —“ This day, October 11th, is my birthday ; I enter upon my ninetieth year, and have walked ten miles.” In this respect Hutton was not unlike Sir Archibald Alison, who notes, in his “ Autobiography,” that on Sept. 9, 1862, at the age of seventy, he walked twenty miles without fatigue in five hours.

A vigorous and regular walker, too, was Henry Fawcett, and was constantly to be encountered upon the roads round Cambridge. In spite of the sad accident which deprived him of his sight, he did not relinquish what was to him one of his most enjoyable recreations. To quote Mr. Leslie Stephen’s words,\* “ he preferred to all other walks the ascent of what, by an abuse of speech pardonable at Cambridge, are called the ‘ hills,’ or more familiarly, ‘ the Gogmagogs,’ or by an affectionate diminutive, the ‘ Gogs.’ The air, he used to declare, was fresher there, because there was nothing higher than a molehill between him and the Ural mountains. He would pause on what passes for the summit to point out to his friends the distant view over King’s College Chapel to the Towers of Ely. He often strode down the towing-path to ‘ see’ (in his

\* “ Life of Henry Fawcett,” 58.



own phrase) a boat race or the practice of the crews."

Edward Miall, again, was always a good walker, and this exercise was one of the very few forms of recreation to which he could resort. Unfortunately, he over-trying his powers, and eventually succumbed to gradual loss of strength through having disregarded the premonitory symptoms, the inconvenience of fatigue, and even the positive pain of walking with sore feet.

Like Archbishop Whately, Henry Kirke White was in the habit of studying while he walked, and in this manner, while at Cambridge, committed to memory a whole tragedy of Euripides. Once more, the late Lord Hatherley was a vigorous and rapid walker; and it may be remembered how Lord Chief Justice Denman used to relate, with no small pride, in after life, that he walked from Cambridge to his father's house in Burlington Street in one day, keeping up the rate of four miles an hour throughout the journey. His companion in this feat was Lancelot Shadwell, the future Vice-Chancellor of England, and the senior medallist of the year, with whom he had formed an intimacy which lasted during their lives.

Thomas Stothard, the artist, when not engaged at his easel, almost always spent his time in long



walks through the streets and suburbs of London. In the summer he was fond of country excursions. He and one or two companions lived in a tent on the coast, near Ramsgate, where they hired a boat and spent days in sailing.

Faraday was a walker, and in early life, in the year 1819, went on an extensive walking tour in Wales, setting out on a coach from the White Horse, Piccadilly, and travelling to Bristol. A full and interesting account of this trip is given in his life,\* in connection with which several amusing anecdotes are related.

Thus, at Machynleth, Faraday tells us in his journal how he wanted a little alcohol, and having found out a doctor's shop and a spruce doctor's man, got some. "I then asked for a little spirits of salts, hoping I should have it in a glass-stoppered bottle. The man found me a bottle, having emptied one of his preparations out of it, and would then have poured in acid, but it was not the acid I wanted, and I again mentioned spirits of salts to him, willing to allow everything to the possibility of his ignorance of the scientific name, but at the same time adding 'muriatic acid,' to save his credit if possible. He now seemed to understand me, and reaching down another bottle, prepared to pour, but I stopped him.

\* "Life of Faraday," Bence Jones.



“ ‘ It is muriatic acid that I want.’

“ ‘ This is muriatic acid, sir.’

“ ‘ No, that is nitric acid.’

“ ‘ They are the same, sir.’

“ ‘ Oh, no, there is a little difference between them, and one will not do for me so well as the other.’

“ I then endeavoured to explain that the one came from nitre, the other from common table salt. I really was ashamed to correct the doctor, and if I had not been under the necessity of vindicating my contradiction of him, should have left him in ignorance. If he had any feeling—and he appeared to have a considerable stock of pride—he must have felt extremely lowered in the eyes of strangers, and before his own companion, who was standing by.” “Is it not strange,” adds Faraday, “that a man so ignorant of his profession should still appear respectable in it, or that one so incompetent should be entrusted with the health and lives of his fellow-creatures.”

Horatio Ross, the well-known sportsman, had marvellous powers of endurance as a walker. On one occasion he walked as umpire with the late Lord Kennedy, Sir Andrew Leith Hay, and others, from the River Dee to Inverness, a distance of ninety-seven miles, without stopping, and was the only one who reached the goal unassisted.



Although blind, John Metcalf was a great walker, and performed several astonishing feats. In 1730-1 he visited London, and was entertained by Colonel Liddell, of Ravensworth Castle, who gave him a general invitation to his house. The Harrogate season being at hand, he determined to proceed thither in order to support himself by his violin playing. It so happened that Colonel Liddell was going there also, and offered him a seat behind his coach. But Metcalf declined the offer, remarking that he could, with great ease, walk as far in a day as he was likely to travel in his carriage, adding that he preferred walking.

That a blind man should undertake to walk a distance of two hundred miles, says Mr. Smiles, over an unknown road, in the same time that it took a gentleman to perform the same distance in his coach, dragged by post-horses, seems almost incredible, yet Metcalf actually arrived at Harrogate before the Colonel, and that without hurrying. But the circumstance, of course, is to be accounted for by the deplorable state of the roads. Metcalf started on a Monday morning, about an hour before the Colonel, in his carriage, and his suite, which consisted of sixteen servants on horseback. It was arranged that they should sleep that night at



Welwyn, in Hertfordshire. Although Metcalf mistook the road after reaching Barnet, he arrived at Welwyn before the Colonel. On the following day he reached Biggleswade, but there found the river swollen, and no bridge to enable travellers to cross to the other side. After making a considerable circuit in the hope of finding some method of crossing the stream, he fortunately fell in with a fellow wayfarer, who led the way across some planks, Metcalf following the sound of his feet. Arrived at the other side, Metcalf took out some pence from his pocket and said —

“Here, my good fellow, take that and get a pint of beer.”

The stranger declined, but on Metcalf’s pressing upon him the small reward he asked —

“Pray, can you see very well?”

“Not remarkably well,” answered Metcalf.

“My friend,” said the stranger, “I do not mean to tithe you. I am the Rector of this parish; so God bless you, and I wish you a good journey.”

Metcalf set forward again and eventually reached Harrogate on the Saturday, completing the journey in six days, but Colonel Liddell did not arrive till the Monday.



## CHAPTER X.

### MUSICAL TASTE.

Dr. Chalmers—Sydney Smith—J. P. Curran—Bishop Beveridge  
—Lord Thurlow — Goldsmith — Gainsborough — Thomas  
Moore—William Etty—Jeremy Bentham—Edmund Jenner  
—Samuel Compton — John Day — Joseph Priestley —  
Samuel Rogers—Edmund Kean—George Grote—Charles  
Kingsley—Faraday—Norman Macleod—James Hogg—  
George Edmund Street—Henry Fawcett—Bishop Thirlwall  
—Charles Reade—Samuel Morley—Constable — George  
Romney — Thomas Arne — Dean Aldrich — Sir Philip  
Francis—William Law—Sir John Hawkins—Dr. Burney—  
Lord Sandwich—Earl of Chatham—Granville Sharp—  
Chatterton—Dryden — Charles Darwin — Dr. Johnson—  
Sir Walter Scott—Lord Byron—Dean Swift—Charles  
Lamb—Sir Humphry Davy—Pope—Dr. Arnold—Henry  
Buckle—Samuel Taylor Coleridge—James Watt—Dean  
Milner—Thomas Telford.

MEN of the most opposite characters, and lives,  
that history can produce have been more or less  
influenced by the power of music ; and, on the  
other hand, many of the greatest, and most  
cultured, minds have been utterly destitute of



the musical ear. Why this should be so has long been a disputed question, but we can only answer —

Whence art thou ? from what causes dost thou spring ?  
Oh music ! thou divine, mysterious thing !

Thus, for instance, if Alfred loved music, so did Nero ; if Cœur de Lion was a sweet musician, so was Charles IX. ; if George III. delighted in every kind of music, especially in that of a sacred character, so likewise did Henry VIII. Indeed, there is no forming any system of judgment. But, as it was observed some years ago in the *Quarterly Review*, there is no broad mark to distinguish those, susceptible of music's influence, from the many who know not one tune from another ; and, furthermore, it is not possible to form any theory of the class of minds most in harmony with music, for illustrations, however numerous, contradict us in every effort to solve this intricate problem. Voltaire, it may be remembered, is generally related to have been a hater, and despiser, of the art of sweet sounds, and Grétry says of him that he would sit with a discontented face while music was going on ; while Dr. Chalmers, a man as unlike him as the world could possibly produce, had little musical sympathy in him, except that, after the manner of Scotchmen, he liked a Scotch air.



But, curious to say, Dr. Chalmers had a remarkable taste for numerical arrangement, even in the most insignificant actions and habits of his life. It regulated every part of his toilet, down even to the daily stropping of his razor. Beginning with his minimum, which was two strokes, he added one stroke more each day successively, till he got up to a number fixed on as his maximum. On reaching this he reversed the process, diminishing the number of his strokes by one each day, till the lowest point was touched, and so by what he would have called a series of oscillations, between his maximum and his minimum, this matter of the stropping undeviatingly progressed. In short, he did almost everything by numbers; for, even, his staff was put down to the ground regularly at each fourth foot-fall. And yet, in spite of this numerical method, he was not musical. In this respect, how different was Haydn, who is said to have been struck with the melodic intervals sung by men delivering bundles of firewood, which he made the subject of a finale to one of his symphonies.

In some instances music seems to have had a remarkable influence on our great men. Carlyle, describing its marvellous power, says: "The meaning of song goes deep. Who is there that in logical words can express the effect music has



on us? A kind of inarticulate, unfathomable speech which leads us to the edge of the infinite, and lets us for a moment gaze into that."

There is a tradition at St. Paul's about Sydney Smith's musical predilections, which is not without interest. It appears that music in the minor key always had a most depressing effect upon him; he felt unnerved by it, and was actually compelled to forbid its introduction into the services whenever he happened to be in residence.\* At the same time Sydney Smith was a lover of music, and he was in the habit of remarking, "If I were to begin life again I would devote much time to music. All musical people seem to be happy; it is the most engrossing pursuit—almost the only innocent and untarnished one." Further evidence is not necessary to show his musical taste, and, indeed, his was just the nature that one would have imagined to be so. He was very fond, also, of singing, and found this a pleasant diversion after his work was over. He was rather slow, however, in learning a song, though when once he had accomplished the task he sang very correctly. "As he never tired, too, of his old friends," writes Lady Holland, "and had always some new one on the stocks, there was a tolerable variety of songs to select from, and with my

\* "Life and Times of Sydney Smith," 1884, 366.



mother's beautiful accompaniment (she was a very accomplished musician) and his own really fine voice, our trios succeeded in pleasing so much that he would often *encore* himself."

Like Sydney Smith, the well-known J. P. Curran was much influenced by music, an amusing account of whose performances on the violoncello is given by Mr. Phillips\* : "It was when at the Priory he chose to exhibit on the violoncello. It was a very large instrument, and doubtless a very fine one, for his taste was fastidious. When, however, he got this machine between his feet he gradually scraped himself into such a fit of enthusiasm, as to render gravity painful, if not impossible. There he sat beneath the shadow of the instrument, which high overtopped him, his under lip, as usual, protracted, his face glowing with self-satisfaction, his head moving to the music he was producing, and his frenzied eye now fixed on the auditor, and now uplifted to the spheres, as if invoking them to pause and listen. The music, no doubt, was excellent, but the muscles of man could not resist the drollery of its accompaniments."

On the other hand, it is equally amusing to note that even Curran's own countenance was occasionally as severely taxed by others, as we

\* "Curran and his Contemporaries," 1850, 29.



learn from one of his letters : “I have got acquainted with a Miss Hume, who is an original in her way. She is romantic and sentimental, and, to crown all, she sings like a nightingale. As I have not the best command of my muscles, I always propose putting out the candles before the song begins, for the greater romanticality of the thing. It is an expedient I used to have recourse to when I had the honour of teaching Nixon to sing. It is a pity when a poor girl is so mistaken in her qualifications as to display only her absurdities, and studiously to conceal everything she ought not to be ashamed of.” But Curran little thought how these remarks applied to himself.

Bishop Beveridge frankly acknowledges the debt he owed to music, for he writes as follows : “That which I have found the best recreation, both to my mind and body, is music. It calls in my spirits, compresses my thoughts, delights my ear, recreates my mind, and so not only fits me for after business, but fills my heart, at the present, with pure and useful thoughts, so that when the music sounds the sweetest in my ears, truth commonly flows the clearest into my mind, and hence it is that I find my soul is become more harmonious by being accustomed so much to harmony, and so averse to all manner of discord



that the least jarring sounds, either in notes or words, seem very harsh and unpleasant to me.”

Throughout life Lord Thurlow had a sensitive appreciation of music, and studied thorough bass in order that he might direct the musical exercises of his children. How keen, indeed, was his ear for music may be illustrated by a little anecdote quoted by Mr. Jeaffreson. In September, 1805, whilst the aged lawyer is lying on a sofa near one of the open windows of his Brighton home, his daughter plays passages of Handel's music on the pianoforte. “So quiet is the reclining form that the pianist thinks her father must be sleeping. Turning on the music-stool to get a view of his countenance, and to satisfy herself as to his state, she makes a false note, when, quick as the blunder, the brown wig turns upon the pillow, the furrowed face is presented to her observation, and an electric brightness fires the big black eyes as the veteran, with deep rolling tones, reproves her carelessness—‘What are you doing? What are you doing? I had almost forgotten the world. Play that piece again.’ Twelve months more and the lady will be playing Handel's music on that same instrument, but the old man will not be a listener.”

Goldsmith was influenced by music, and played



tolerably well on the German flute. It is recorded that when vexed by temporary annoyances he had recourse to this instrument, and blew it with a kind of mechanical vehemence till his equanimity of temper returned. In London, too, until a late period of life, he amused his friends with Irish songs, exhibiting much of the peculiar humour of his country. But Sir John Hawkins, who viewed Goldsmith with no favourable eye, mentions a piece of deception practised upon him, proving, he says, that the poet understood “not the character in which music is written, but played entirely by ear.” The story, however, has generally been received with caution:—

“Roubiliac, the sculptor, a merry fellow, once heard him play, and minding to put a trick upon him, pretended to be charmed with his performance, as that also himself was skilled in the art, and entreated him to repeat the air, that he might write it down. Goldsmith readily consented, and Roubiliac, calling for paper, scored thereon a few five-line staves, which having done, Goldsmith proceeded to play and Roubiliac to write, but his writing was only such random notes, on the lines and spaces, as anyone might set down who had never inspected a page of music. When they had done, Roubiliac showed the paper to Goldsmith, who, having looked it over with seeming great



attention, said it was very correct, and that if he had not seen him do it he never could have believed his friend capable of writing music after him." But it has been urged by Mr. Prior, in defence of Goldsmith, that supposing the story were true, "it indicates a good-natured acquiescence in what he did not stop to examine, or a degree of delicacy in charging ignorance or imposture upon the supposed musician, rather than total ignorance of the matter in question."

Although Gainsborough never had patience to learn his notes, he was passionately fond of music, and played upon several instruments. One day he was so delighted with the playing of Colonel Hamilton on the violin that he exclaimed, whilst tears of rapture rolled down his cheeks, "Go on, and I will give you the picture of the 'Boy at the Stile,' which you have so often wished to purchase of me." When once, too, he took a fancy to an instrument, no price prevented him from purchasing it, in connection with which peculiarity we may quote the following anecdote:—Having seen a lute, finely played by Vandyck, he concluded that it must be a fine instrument, and hearing of a German professor who possessed one, he called upon him for the purpose of purchasing it, when the ensuing conversation took place:—



“I am come to buy your lute; name your price, and here’s your money.”

“I cannot sell my lute.”

“No! Not for a guinea or two? But you must sell it, I tell you.”

“My lute is worth much money; it is worth ten guineas.”

“Ah! that it is; see, here’s the money.”

So saying, he took up the instrument, went half down the stairs, and returned.

“I have done but half my errand. What is your lute worth if I have not your book?”

“What book, Master Gainsborough?”

“Why, the book of airs you have composed for the lute; there’s ten guineas for it, so, once more, good day.”

He went down a few steps, and returned again.

“What use is your book to me, if I don’t understand it? And your lute, you may take it again, if you will not teach me to play on it. Come home with me, and give me the first lesson.”

“I will come to-morrow.”

“You must come now.”

“But I must shave, sir?”

“Do you think if Vandyck were to paint you he would let you be shaved?”

This is only one of the many curious anecdotes



told of Gainsborough, showing what a curious fascination music had for him.

In addition to his brilliant conversation, it was his rare musical talents that made Moore a welcome guest in the most fashionable London society. He sang his own verses to his own tunes, both of which were set off by the most graceful expression of countenance and charm of manner. Hence with this singular and seductive talent he quickly made his way in the “singing, dancing, suppering society” of his time. His songs have been described as little amatory breathings rather than poetry, and his voice rather a warbling than singing. And it was acknowledged that from “no other lips—not even those of female beauty—did his songs ever come with such fascinating effect.”

William Etty found solace in music, and in one of his letters thus jocularly writes:—“I have been so often and unprofitably in love, that I have serious thoughts of paying my addresses to—my *Tea-kettle*. I have often found her a very warm friend. She sings, too, and you know how fond I was of music. I have heard music a thousand times more unpleasant than hers. On a winter’s night, after a well-spent day, with a volume of old poetry—Shakespeare, Milton, Spenser—when the wind is blowing, and pattering, the rain against



one's window, then sweet is the song of the kettle; sweeter to a studious man than a crying child, or scolding wife."

Another great lover of music was Jeremy Bentham, who had an organ in his house, and a piano in almost every room. In one of his letters he thus alludes to his musical outlay:—"I have just been ruining myself by two pieces of extravagance, an organ that is to cost two hundred and thirty pounds; is half as large, or twice again as large as the other; goes up to the ceiling and down to the floor of my workshop, giving birth to an abyss, in which my music-stool is lodged; looking like an elephant or a rhinoceros, and projecting in such sort that between that and the book carrocio there is no getting the dinner-tray on the little table without a battle."

Again, Edmund Jenner, the discoverer of vaccination, although most of his time was chiefly occupied with professional duties, still cultivated his natural taste for music, and thereby, afforded his friends much amusement, for he not only performed on the flute and violin, but sang his own ballads with considerable taste and feeling.

Like Jenner, we find Samuel Compton, famous as the inventor of the spinning mill, a lover of sweet sounds. Accordingly, when, through business, debarred from company, and accustomed to



solitude, he developed his musical taste, to gratify which he was led to the first trial of his mechanical skill in making a violin, upon which he commenced learning to play. With this musical friend, writes his biographer, he would beguile many a long winter night, or, during the summer evenings, wander contemplatively among the green lanes, or by the margin of the pleasant brook that swept round the romantic old residence of Hall in the wood.

As the maker of his own violin, we are reminded of another celebrated musician, John Day, who died at the commencement of the present century. The story runs that he was in the habit of purloining horse-shoes, which he formed into an octave, so arranged and modulated as to imitate the chimes of a church—one of those interesting instances of the inventive power of true talent.

The eminent philosopher, Joseph Priestley, who allowed himself but little recreation, occasionally indulged in his favourite amusement, playing on the flute, an instrument on which he was rather more than an average performer. Indeed, music to him was almost a necessity, and he generally recommended it as a relief to those engaged in mental pursuits. In this respect, he was undoubtedly right, for, apart from the measure of enjoyment which music affords to cultivated people,



it frequently acts as a powerful and soothing solace. Hence it is not surprising that men engaged in occupations requiring more or less brain exertion, should seek relief in music.

Equally strong was Samuel Rogers' musical taste, and when he had dined at home, and alone, it was his custom to have an Italian organ-grinder playing in the hall, "the organ being set to the Sicilian mariners' air and other popular tunes of the South." He even kept nightingales in cages on his staircase and in his bedroom to sing to him. The morning was the time when he enjoyed music most, and nothing caused him greater annoyance than to hear the songs he loved profaned by inferior execution. "Can you stay and bear it?" was his muttered remonstrance to a friend, whom he fairly dragged out of the room when an accomplished amateur was throwing as much soul as he could muster into —

Give smiles to those who love you less,  
But keep your tears for me.

On another occasion—a breakfast party—one of the guests sang one of his songs to his evident composure. "Well," said Rogers, "I have seen the bravest men of my time. I have seen Nelson, Wellington, and Ney, but our friend is the bravest of them all."

With Edmund Kean music was a passion, and



in truth so much so that when one day he heard some magnificent strains, the blood rushed to the tragedian's face. With such a taste, there can be little doubt that, during his struggling career as a strolling player, he must have felt deeply the want of the time and means by which he could have cultivated it. Happily, when such obstacles were removed, "assisted by a fine ear and intuitive appreciation of melody, he rendered himself able to touch the piano, and other instruments, with a degree of skill that would not have disgraced a professor."\*

His, indeed, was an enthusiastic love, and in his hours of *ennui* was the source of intense pleasure, although his work often prevented him from gaining as much enjoyment in his musical taste as he could have wished. But this must necessarily be the case with most busy men, many of whom have even been forced to relinquish, at one period, or another, in their life, this oftentimes their special hobby.

George Grote, for instance, possessed considerable talent for music, and he and his wife were in the habit of playing duets on two violoncellos, as well as pianoforte duets with his accompaniments. But, much to his regret, he was ultimately obliged to give up his violoncello, finding too

\* Life of, by F. W. Hawkins, i, 334-5.



many other claims, pressing on his time and attention, to permit of his practising on this instrument.

Another lover of music was Faraday. As a young man, in a letter to his friend Mr. Abbott, from the Royal Institution, he writes:—"Confound the music says I: it turns my thoughts quite round, or half-way round, from the letter. You must know, sir, that there is a grand party at dinner at Jacques' Hotel, which immediately faces the back of the Institution; and the music is so excellent that I cannot, for the life of me, help running, at every fresh piece they play, to the window to hear them. I shall do no good at this letter to-night, and so will go to bed, and 'listen, listen, to the voice of' bassoons, violins, clarionettes, trumpets, serpents, and all the accessories to good music. I can't stop—Good night."

When staying at Llangollen, during a walking tour in 1819, he gives in his journal a pleasant little musical reminiscence:—"Whilst at breakfast, the river Dee flowing before our windows, the second harper I have heard in Wales struck his instrument, and played some airs in very excellent style. I enjoyed them for a long time, and then, wishing to gratify myself with a sight of the interesting *bard*, went to the door and beheld the *boots*! He, on seeing me open the door,



imagined I wanted something, and, quitting his instrument, took up his third character of *waiter*. I must confess I was sadly disappointed and extremely baulked.

“Even at Bethgellert they had a good-looking blind old man, though he played badly; and now when I heard delightful sounds, and had assured myself the harper was in accordance with the effect he produced, he sank on a sudden, many, many stages down, into a common waiter. Well, after all, I certainly left Llangollen regretting the harp less because of the person who played it.” Before his marriage he played on the flute, and probably, to save expense, he copied out much music, which still exists, and he used to say that in early life he knew a hundred songs by heart. But after his marriage he had no time for the flute.

Norman Macleod, wherever he had the opportunity, indulged his musical fancies, and sang well to the guitar, while James Hogg, or, as he is popularly known, the “Ettric Shepherd,” at the early age of fourteen, evinced a strong love for music. We are told how he managed to save five shillings, with which he bought himself a fiddle, and with this amused, and solaced, himself during his leisure hours, which do not appear, however, to have been



very numerous. His nocturnal performances on the fiddle, when he had retired to his sleeping-place, disturbed no one but himself, and his associate quadrupeds; this, at this period, either being in the stables, or in the cow-house. It should be added that his violin continued to be a favourite amusement with him in all his after days; and the shepherd's violin, in its old red leather case, with the brass nails, remains in the careful possession of his family.

Without professing to understand music, Charles Kingsley always loved it, and regarded it as a necessary qualification for high mental culture. Addressing the students of the Berkeley University at Oakland, during his stay at San Francisco, he paid a special tribute to music. He told his audience that he "trusted music would reach the dignity of a science to the University. Not one student in one hundred would continue to give music attention in after life, and yet the beneficial influence of the study would still be manifest. Music was necessary to the rounding and finishing of the perfect character."

George Edward Street, the eminent architect, was always fond of music. Many a time when he had just come off a long and tiring railway journey he went off, after snatching a hasty meal, to get his brain cleared at the opera, or at a Concert of Chamber music.



When he lost his eye-sight, Henry Fawcett resolutely set himself to improve his taste for music, this being one of the few recreations, he used to observe, which a blind man may enjoy without immediate dependence upon others. Accordingly he acquired so much taste as to enjoy an evening at a concert or an opera; and his enjoyment increased, in a marked manner, during the last two years of his life, when after his illness he had more enforced leisure. We can imagine how, to his busy, active mind, cut off, as he was, through his sad blindness, from many of the pleasures of life, music must have been a priceless boon. Such it was also to Bishop Thirlwall, who delighted in its harmonious sounds, and was especially fond of the songs of Wales and Italy.

When the business of the day was over, Charles Reade, who was known for entering so thoroughly into all the concerns of life, would often have recourse to music as one of his recreations. "Late in the evening," writes Miss Braddon, "he would sit himself at the piano, and after playing a few chords, would sing some old world ballads, in a low voice which was full of tenderness. Those simple pathetic songs seemed a fitting close to the long evening talk."

One of the greatest of Samuel Morley's home pleasures was music. He never wearied of hearing his children play and sing, and dearly loved



to sing duets with his eldest daughter. He sang well himself, in a clear, mellow voice, and kept up his singing until quite late in life.

Again, a mind like Constable's, united to a highly nervous and sensitive temperament, could not be indifferent to music. In early life he was a good flute player, but laid aside this instrument as he found that painting required his whole attention. Preferring, at all times, simplicity and expression to an ostentatious display of art, it happened that, on one occasion, at a musical party, during a musical trio in Italian, with which his ears were stunned, and which was only suitable for the area of the opera house, he whispered to a friend, "I dare say it is very fine, for it is very disagreeable; but if those people were to make such a noise before your door or mine, we should send for the police to take them away."

Another painter who was fond of music was George Romney. In the hours of solitary study, while engaged in transferring to the canvas the creations of his imagination, his violin was always at hand. As he often found it necessary, in the progress of his work, to step back in order to judge of the effect, he would sometimes, on these occasions, amuse himself by playing a favourite air, till a new idea, or alteration, came across his



mind, when the violin was instantly dismissed, and the pencil resumed. "Thus the two arts conspired," writes his biographer, "and the harmony of the picture was improved by the harmony of music." His instructor in the violin was a man named Williamson, a watchmaker by trade, whom he once accompanied to Whitehaven to hear Giardini perform. So enchanted was he with the marvellous notes he brought out that it was afterwards oftentimes a struggle in his mind, whether he should devote himself to painting or music. Gainsborough was, also, equally enraptured when he heard the same performer at Bath, but with this difference of feeling—that he wished for the instrument, and Romney, the art.

Among further instances of marvellous musical taste may be noticed that of the well-known composer Thomas Arne, who almost in infancy imbibed a passion for music. "I have been assured by many of his schoolfellows," writes Dr. Burney,\* "that his love for music operated too powerfully upon him, even while he was at Eton, for his own peace of mind or that of his companions; for, with a miserable cracked common flute, he used to torment them night and day, when not obliged to attend the school. During the spare moments in a lawyer's office, he

\* "History of Music," iv, 655.



would snatch every available moment for the cultivation of his favourite pursuit. When in want of money, it was his habit to borrow a servant's livery, by which means he gained a free admission to the upper gallery of the opera, which in those days was appropriated to the domestics of the noble and the wealthy, who happened to be in attendance on their masters or mistresses.\*

But eventually an unforeseen incident had fortunately the effect of reconciling his father to what he considered his son's unprofitable, and useless, task. Chancing to call one day at a friend's house upon business, he discovered his son, much to his astonishment, in the very act of playing first violin at a concert upstairs. Finding him more admired for his musical talents than knowledge in the law, he was soon prevailed upon to forgive his unruly passion, and to let him try to turn it to some account. No sooner was the young musician able to practice aloud in his father's house than he bewitched the whole family, and henceforth his position was made.

Then there was Dean Aldrich, whom Macaulay styles the "polite, though not profound scholar, and jovial, hospitable gentleman." He was eminently skilled in music, having adapted

\* Jesse's "Celebrated Etonians," i., 206.



English words to the airs of many Italian composers. His well-known catch, "Hark, the bonny Christchurch bells," first appeared in the *Pleasant Musical Companion*, and in the same publication was published his smoking catch "to be sung by four men smoking their pipes, not more difficult to sing than diverting to hear." Sir Philip Francis, one of those to whom the "Letters of Junius" have been attributed, was passionately attached to music, as was also William Law, the mystic divine, but who held the somewhat untenable opinion that everyone can sing. To listen to music, and to sing himself, after a fashion, was his delight. Whether, however, he had any musical power himself, does not appear; probably not, according to his biographer, for if he had, he would have hardly maintained the paradox that everybody could sing. The fact of Sir John Hawkins and Dr. Burney\* having been the famous historians of music, speaks for itself of their love for the art of melody. It would seem that, at the time of the appearance of their works, popularity ran all on the side of the latter's book, and an immense deal was said and written in disparagement of the rival history. "The cream of the waggery," suggests Mr. Crowest,† "was, perhaps, Dr. Cal-

\* Life of, by J. H. Overton, 1881, 235.

† "Musical Anecdotes," i., 106.



cott's amusing catch, which supplies a good illustration of the controversy, the words and music of which were both supplied by the celebrated glee writer." The words ran thus :—

1ST VOICE—Have you Sir John Hawkins' Hist'ry?

Some folks think it quite a myst'ry.

2ND VOICE—Music filled his wondrous brain—

How d'ye like him? Is it plain?

3RD VOICE—Both I've read, and must agree

That Burney's Hist'ry pleases me.

The unfortunate Lord Sandwich was another musical enthusiast, and we are told how "the musicians offered up incense to him as their patron; he was the soul of the catch club, and one of the directors of the concerts of ancient music. In the oratorios which varied the Christmas festivities at Hinchinbrook, he performed on the kettle drum; and the jocular catch, "Fie! nay, pr'ythee, John," is said to have been his composition.\*

William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, enjoyed a taste for music which helped occasionally to cheer and enliven his leisure moments, and Granville Sharp, the noted philanthropist, we are told, "loved the theory and enjoyed the practice of music;"—singing and playing at sight having been his favourite recreations. He performed on the flute, clarionet, and double

\* "Celebrated Etonians," ii., 81.



flute, and had constructed a harp with two rows of strings—called a traverse harp—on which he accompanied his own voice in singing.

Once more, the unhappy Chatterton, whose brief career ended in despair, possessed a fine ear and taste for music. His operative verse “is varied and harmonious, and his burlettas, though slight, display a dramatic action fully equal to the occasion.”\*

Instances such as those quoted above prove, as we have already said, how music, with its magic influence, affects minds of every conceivable kind, from the most prosaic to the highly poetical. Here is no broad mark. Thus, whether it be Dryden, who overflows with love for the art, and has left in Alexander’s feast a “manual of musical mesmerism never to be surpassed,” or whether it be the man of science—both are equally charmed by its sounds. Charles Darwin had a true love of fine music, although he had not a good ear. At any rate, it was his great delight to listen to some grand symphony, or overture, of Mozart or Beethoven.

On one occasion he attended the afternoon service at King’s College, Cambridge, where he heard a very beautiful anthem. At the end of one of the parts, which was exceedingly impressive, he

\* See “Chatterton : A Biographical Study,” G. D. Wilson, 1869, 274.



turned round to his friend, Mr. Herbert, and said, with a deep sigh, "How's your backbone?" He often spoke of a feeling of coldness or shivering in his back on hearing beautiful music. But, unfortunately, great as his pleasure was in listening to a good tune, especially after his day's work was over, he was unable, through his want of ear, to recognize it again, and would often say, when an old favourite was played, "That's a fine thing; what is it?"

But in his defective ear Darwin was not unlike many leading men in past years who have found absolutely no pleasure in music at all, feeling towards it what Wordsworth has written of the "Ranz des Vaches":—

I listen, but no faculty of mine  
Avails those modulations to detect,  
Which, heard in foreign lands, the Swiss affect  
With tenderest passion.

Dr. Johnson, it may be remembered, could never tell one note from another, although he one day remarked that "if he had learnt music he should have been afraid he would have done nothing else but play. It was a method of employing the mind, without the labour of thinking at all, and with some applause from a man's self. But, as it was, his musical



perception only went so far that he “knew a drum from a trumpet, and a bagpipe from a guitar.”

Dr. Burney, who frequently met Johnson at Mr. Thrale’s house, at Streatham, where they had many conversations, “often sitting up as long as the fire and candles lasted, and much longer than the patience of the servants subsisted,” has left the following anecdote :—

“After having talked slightly of music, Johnson was observed to listen very attentively while Miss Thrale played on the harpsichord, and with eagerness he called to her —

“ ‘Why don’t you dash away like Burney?’

“Whereupon Dr. Burney said to him —

“ ‘I believe, sir, we shall make a musician of you at last.’

Johnson, with candid complacency, replied —

“ ‘Sir, I shall be glad to have a new sense given to me.’ ”

Like Johnson, Sir Walter Scott had little ear for music, and in his “Autobiography” he tells us that his mother was anxious he “should at least learn psalmody, but the incurable defects of my voice and ear soon drove my teacher to despair.” It is true that he loved the hum of the bagpipe, but in his Diary we find this entry:—  
“My little nieces gave us some pretty music. I



do not know and cannot tell a note of music, and complicated harmonies seem to me a battle of confused, though pleasing sounds."

Lord Byron, again, although he loved the music that came to him "O'er the Water," yet had no decided ear for music. And yet in his Diary he makes a touching entry:—"Oh! here is an organ playing in the street; a waltz, too! I must leave off to listen. They are playing a waltz which I heard ten thousand times at the balls in London between 1812 and 1815. Music is a strange thing!" In this little incident, touching so suddenly upon the nerve of memory, and calling away his mind from his dark bodings to a recollection of years, and scenes, the happiest, perhaps, of his whole life, there is something, says his biographer, Thomas Moore, peculiarly affecting.

Like Byron and Sir Walter Scott, it is well-known that Swift was not one of those who have "music in themselves," for, despite the circumstance that he was by no means complimentary to the musical folk of his day, he could never distinguish much difference between one tune and another. The following is an amusing instance of his behaviour to the musical world, quoted from his "Journal to Stella":—"We have a music meeting in our town to-night. I went



to the rehearsal, and there was Margarita (de l'Epine, a singer of considerable talent) and her sister, and another arab, and a parcel of fiddlers." It has been suggested, however, that the Dean's contempt for music may have been in some degree affectation, judging from the ensuing anecdote, which can scarcely have been altogether complimentary:—

"Lady Burlington," said the Dean, after dinner one day, "I hear you can sing; sing me a song."

The lady, however, not quite liking his uncere-  
monious, and abrupt, way of speaking, declined to accede to his request. But the Dean said she should sing, or he would make her.

"Why, madam, I suppose you take me for one of your poor hedge parsons; sing when I bid you."

As Lord Burlington did nothing but laugh at the Dean's freedom, the lady was so vexed that she burst into tears, and retired.

Swift did not forget the occurrence, and his first words, when he saw her again, were —

"Pray, madam, are you as proud and ill-natured now as when I last saw you?"

To which she replied with great good humour —

"No, Mr. Dean, I'll sing for you if you please."

This little bit of pleasantry, meant in good-natured humour, had the desired effect, and was thoroughly characteristic of Swift.



Similarly, Charles Lamb had no ear for music, and he once admitted that he was incapable of deriving the slightest pleasure from it. Indeed, Barry Cornwall tells us that he never heard a song in his house, nor any conversation, on the subject of melody or harmony. Yet we are told that the sentiment, apart from the science of music, gave him great pleasure. Thus he revered the fine organ-playing of Mr. Novello, and admired the singing of his daughter, "the tuneful daughter of a tuneful sire." But he strongly resented the misapplication of the theatres to sacred music, considering this a profanation of the good old original secular purposes of the playhouse.

It was curious that, considering what a fine perception Sir Humphrey Davy had of the beautiful in nature, and, as Wordsworth says, was able to grasp—

All that we behold  
From this green earth, of all the mighty world,  
Of eye and ear, both what they half-create  
And what perceive,

yet he lacked the musical ear. He could not even catch the simple air of the National Anthem, and, whilst a member of a volunteer corps, he could never keep step, and, although he took private lessons of a sergeant, he still trod upon the heels of the fore-rank man. Though lacking a musical



ear, and a quick perception of the difference of sounds, he studied its intonation carefully, and acquired a manner which a person with a fastidious taste for music might find fault with, and yet was very agreeable to a mixed audience. "I recollect, at the first anniversary dinner of the Royal Society," writes his brother, "at which he appeared in his capacity of President, after the cloth was removed, and he had addressed the company in a speech which was extremely well received, the gentleman who sat next me (and who was not aware that I was his brother) turned to me and said that he was sure the President was not musical; that his voice was very fine, but it was deficient in just musical modulation."

It is stated, too, how even the harmonious Pope preferred the harsh dissonance of a street organ to Handel's oratorios, and Dr. Arnold, in one of his letters, confesses his total inability to appreciate music of any kind, and says:—"Those who are musical scarcely can understand what it is to want that sense wholly. I cannot perceive what to others is a keen source of pleasure. There is no link by which my mind can attach it to itself, and, much as I regret this defect, I can no more remedy it than I could make my mind mathematical, or than some other men could enter into



the deep delight with which I look at a wood anemone, or wood-sorrel.”\*

But he adds that he considered it a proof of Bunsen's real regard for him that he still held intercourse with him, although, in the matter of music he proved himself utterly insensible to what he admired and loved so much.

Equally unmusical was Henry Buckle, who, as a rule, could not tell one tune from another. On one occasion he thought that he did recognize an air for “God save the Queen,” but it turned out to be “Rule Britannia.” Once in his life there seems to have been an exception to this peculiarity, and that was when Franz Liszt played—a performer whose remarkable powers Heine has thus described:—“All other performers whom we have heard in countless concerts this year are only performers—brilliant merely in their power of manipulation over the wood, and lire. But when Liszt plays, the piano fades utterly from our thoughts. We no longer think on difficulties overcome—our souls are bathed in music.” It is no matter of surprise that Buckle should have enjoyed such music, and, as Mr. Huth remarks, “his want of sensibility to the influence of this art may have been due to the imperfection of interpretation.”

\* “Life of Dr. Arnold,” by Dean Stanley, 1881, ii., 181.



Samuel Taylor Coleridge had no ear for music and could not sing an air to save his life, and yet his delight in music was intense and invariable, and he could detect good from bad with unerring discrimination. One day Naldi said to him at a concert “that he did not seem much interested with a piece of Rossini’s which had just been performed.”

Coleridge answered, “It sounded to me exactly like *nonsense verses*. But this thing of Beethoven’s that they have begun—stop, let us listen to this, I beg.”

Curious to say, although Coleridge had no ear for music, he was made up of music. As it has been observed,† some of his poems are complete models of versification, exquisitely easy to all appearance, and subservient to the meaning, and yet so subtle in the links and transition of the parts as to make it impossible to produce the same effect merely by imitating the syllabic metre, as it stands on the surface. It is this remarkable power of making his verse musical that gives a peculiar charm to Coleridge’s lyric poems.

Henry Crabb Robinson was unmusical, having, as he says, “scarcely any sensibility to music.” On one occasion he went to a concert at Brighton, and heard Paganini; an interesting account of whose performance he thus gives:—“It is, per-



haps, in a great measure from the length of finger and thumb that his fiddle is also a sort of lute. He came forward and played, from notes, his own compositions. Of the music, as such, I know nothing. The sounds were wonderful. He produced high notes very faint, which resembled the chirruping of birds, and then in an instant, with a startling change, rich and melodious notes, approaching those of the bass viol. It was difficult to believe that the great variety of sounds proceeded from one instrument. The effect was heightened by his extravagant gesticulation and whimsical attitudes. He sometimes played with his fingers as on a harp, and sometimes struck the cords with his bow as if it were a drum stick, sometimes striking his elbow into his chest, and sometimes flourishing his bow. Oftentimes the sounds were sharp, like those of musical glasses, and only now and then really delicious to my vulgar ear, which is gratified merely by the flute and other melodious instruments, and has little sense of harmony.”\*

Anyhow, it is difficult to reconcile instances of this kind with the strange notion of our forefathers, who were of opinion that unmusical per-

\* “Diary, Reminiscences, and Correspondence of H. C. Robinson,” ii., 526.

† *Quarterly Review*, lii., 8, 9.



sons ought to be shunned, and their actions viewed with suspicion, and mistrust. Thus Shakespeare, in "The Merchant of Venice," makes Lorenzo (Act v., Sc. 1) exclaim :—

The man that hath no music in himself,  
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,  
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils ;  
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,  
And his affections dark as Erebus :  
Let no such man be trusted.

Similarly, Beaumont and Fletcher represent in one of their plays old "Merrythought" saying, "Never trust a tailor that does not sing at his work, for his mind is nothing but filching." And we are told of an unfortunate individual who tried to pass for a shoemaker, but was detected as an impostor because he could "neither sound the trumpet, play upon the flute, nor reckon upon his tool in time."

But time has modified this severe judgment, for experience has shown that if Grétry danced when a child to the sound of dropping water, if Purcell composed some of his best anthems while a choir boy at Westminster, if Charles Wesley played the harpsichord at three, when his mother tied him to the chair lest he should fall off, and if Mozart, when an infant only three years old, would strike thirds on the clavichord, and incline his little head, smiling to the



harmony of the vibrations, other children, in spite of their developing no musical taste whatever, have turned out the most eminent men.

As is well known, James Watt could not tell one musical note from another, but curious to say he could build an organ and construct musical instruments of perfect compass and tone. On one occasion a Masonic lodge in Glasgow wanted an organ, whereupon the office-bearers proceeded to Watt, who, to help them out of their difficulty, promised to build one. According to Professor Robison, before he had half-finished his organ "he was completely master of that most refined, and beautiful, theory of the beats of imperfect consonances. He found that by these beats it would be possible for him, totally ignorant of music, to tune this organ according to any system of temperament; and he did so to the delight and astonishment of our best performers."\* His musical labours did not end here, for his friend Alexander Cumming, a very ingenious adept in similar pursuits, writing to him, approves of his scheme for an organ, supplies him with a note of the prices of organ-pipes, and inquires, "How gets on fiddle-making?" Indeed, nothing seemed to baffle his penetration, or to deter his zeal, and, his triumph in organ-

\* "Life of J. Watt," by J. P. Muirhead, 46-47.



building, was only one instance of his endeavours to subjugate, by the resources of practical art, those natural difficulties which presented themselves to his hand or eye.

It is well known that Dean Milner possessed little, or no, ear for music. In this respect he resembled his brother Joseph, in whom the same deficiency seems to have been even absolute. On one occasion, chance threw in their way an advertisement setting forth that "The Messiah" was about to be performed at Beverley, in an unusually efficient manner. Hither they resolved to repair, as they had flattered themselves that their peculiarity might be explained by the fact that they had never really heard any good music. On arriving at Beverley they took their seats in the minster; the confused clangour of tuning was hushed, the conductor, an important-looking person, with a large roll of paper in his hand, gave the authoritative signal, and the overture to "The Messiah" commenced. "It was no place," writes Dr. Milner, "for talking, but we turned round and looked at one another, and shook our heads; we were satisfied. This, as we were given to understand, was first-rate music; alas! alas! to us it was all alike. We stayed but a little while."

Thomas Telford, the engineer, was indifferent to



the charms of music. On one occasion, attending a concert given at Shrewsbury for the Infirmary, he tells us that he was thoroughly disappointed, and then became convinced that he had no ear for music. The only difference that he recognized between one tune and another was that there was a difference of noise. "It was all very fine," he says, "I have no doubt; but I would not give a song of Jock Stewart\* for the whole of them. The melody of sound is thrown away upon me. One look, one word, of Mrs. Jordan, has more effect upon me than all the fiddles in England. Yet I sat down, and tried to be as attentive as any mortal could be. I endeavoured, if possible, to get up an interest in what was going on; but it was all of no use. I felt no emotion whatever, excepting only a strong inclination to go to sleep. It must be a defect, but it is a fact, and I cannot help it. I suppose my ignorance of the subject, and the want of musical experience in my youth, may be the cause of it."

\* An Eskdale crony. His son, Colonel Jonas Stewart, rose to eminence in the East India Company's service.



## CHAPTER XI.

### GARDENING AND AGRICULTURE.

Charles Lamb—Cowley—Sir Robert Peel—Lord Althorp—  
Henry Erskine—Shenstone—Addison—Sir Walter  
Scott—Earl of Chatham—Lord Macaulay—Lord  
Collingwood—Earl Bute—C. J. Fox—Lord Boling-  
broke—Sir Richard Steele—Horace Walpole—Dr.  
Arnold—Walter Savage Landor—Charles R. Leslie,  
Norman. Macleod—Bishop Thirlwall—Wedgwood—  
George Stephenson—William Wilberforce—Warren  
Hastings—John Howard—James Watt—John Locke—  
Sir Joseph Banks—Wm. Roscoe—George Crabbe—Dr.  
Carey—Cowper—Archbishop Whately—Leigh Hunt—  
Lord John Russell—Burke—John Horne Tooke—Duke  
of Bridgewater—Sir Ralph Abercromby—Wm. Cobbett  
—Lord Lyndhurst—Lord Eversley.

“GIVE me but a garden!” is a wish which—  
adapted to all sorts and conditions of men—has  
been often sighed forth by many of our great and  
eminent workers, anxious to quit the busy path of  
life and the smoke-laden air of the town for the  
fresh breezes and quiet repose of the country.  
But even in this respect tastes do not agree.



“Live always in the spring-time in the country,” writes Mr. Ruskin; “you do not know what leaf-form means unless you have seen the buds burst, and the young leaves breathing low in the sunshine, and wondering at the first shower of rain.” On the other hand, Charles Lamb called the country odious and detestable, and actually maintained that “a garden was the primitive prison till man, with Promethean felicity and boldness, luckily sinned himself out of it.”

Lamb’s idea, however, of the country was very limited, for when he wrote the above passage to Wordsworth he was living in a street in Enfield, with “Shops two yards square, half-a-dozen apples, and two penn’orth of over-cooked gingerbread, for the lofty fruiterers of Oxford street; and for the immortal book and print stalls, a circulating library that stands still, where the show picture is a last year’s valentine.” Such a locality found no attraction for Lamb, who, next to the Temple, made Covent Garden his favourite resort. Surely such instances are the exception !

If Dr. Johnson, again, would not stop to inquire “whether landscape gardening demands any great powers of the mind,” yet time would fail to tell of all those royal, and noble, personages whom old Gerarde enumerates in his “Herbal” as having



either “loved to live in gardens,” or written treatises on the subject. Thus James I. and Charles II. are mentioned as having given their personal superintendence to the royal gardens; while a change in the style of laying out grounds is very generally attributed to the accession of William and Mary. In short, “as gardening has been the inclination of kings, and the choice of philosophers,” writes Sir W. Temple, “so it has been the common favourite of public and private men; a pleasure of the greatest, and the care of the meanest; and, indeed, an employment and a possession for which no man is too high nor too low.”

Cowley’s aspiration, too, will always find an echo so long as the struggle for wealth, and distinction, necessitates incessant application in every sphere of life. Thus, “I never had any other desire so strong and so like to covetousness as that one which I have always had,” he writes, “that I might be master at last of a small house, and large garden, with very moderate conveniences joined to them, and there dedicate the remainder of my life only to the culture of them, and study of nature—

“And there, with no design beyond my wall,  
Whole and entire to lye,  
In no inactive ease, and no unglorious poverty.

An existence of this kind may well be envied by



those engaged in the busy turmoil of life, and we know how Earl Beaconsfield loved to snatch a few days' repose in that charming spot which he made his country home, Hughenden Manor. Similarly, too, Sir Robert Peel, in the the intervals of public business, generally retired to Drayton Manor, where he found constant and congenial employment in the supervision of the management of his estates, and in the pursuits peculiar to the country, of which he was devotedly fond.

Lord Althorp, on resigning office, in the year 1832, spent part of the next day in a nursery garden, choosing and buying flowers, brought home five large packages in his carriage, and devoted a long time to considering where they should be planted in the garden at Althorp, writing directions, and drawing plans, for that arrangement. Office, indeed, had been the reverse of Paradise to Lord Althorp. And the relief he felt at the prospect of a little rest may be gathered from the following amusing incident, related by Mr. Jeffrey, the oracle of the Scotch Whigs, who had visited him in Downing Street, with the view of asking him what course should be taken with the Scotch Reform Bill.

“I had,” he writes, “a characteristic scene with that most frank, true, and stout-hearted of God's creatures. He had not come down-



stairs, and I was led up to his dressing-room, where I found him sitting on a stool, in a dark duffel dressing-gown, with his arms bare above the elbows, and his beard half-shaved, with a desperate razor in one hand and a great soap brush in the other. He gave me the loose finger of his brush hand, and, with the usual twinkle of his bright eye, and a radiant smile, he said, ‘ You need not be anxious about your Scotch Bills to-night, as I have the pleasure to tell you we are no longer His Majesty’s Ministers.’ ”\*

In the same way, Henry Erskine, when he gave up the Bar, and retired to his country house at Ammondell, soon became absorbed in rural pursuits, and landscape gardening. In September, 1812, he was visited by Horner, who writes:—“ He is living among the plantations he has been making for the last twenty years in the midst of all the bustle of business. He has the banks of the river Almond for about four miles. He told me he has thrown away the law like a dirty clout, and had forgotten it altogether. It is delightful to see the same high spirits which made him such a favourite in the world while he was in the career of ambition, and prosperity still attending him, after all the disappointments that would have chagrined another man to death.”

\* Cockburn’s “ *Memoirs of Lord Jeffrey*,” Vol. i., 330.



Speaking of his father's taste for gardening, Lord Buchan says that he had a great delight in embellishing his grounds, but professed ever to follow nature's lead—not dictate.

“I like to wash her face,” he used to say, “and make her presentable, but not trick her out in ornament.” When White, the landscape gardener, came to Ammondell, and advised him to fill up a small ravine where a stream falls into the Almond, telling him it would only cost about £300, he said, “I would rather give £300 to make it, if it were not there.”

Landscape gardening was a perfect passion with Shenstone, who spent the greater part of his life in improving the Leasowes, which ere long became the envy of the neighbourhood. The celebrity which his residence thus acquired, and his desire of appearing in better circumstances than his means admitted, soon involved him in pecuniary embarrassments, and “rendered him the wretched inhabitant of the Eden he had created for others.” To improve his grounds everything else was sacrificed, and although his house might admit the wind and the rain, for the want of repairs, he felt no inconvenience if he had only made a new walk, or opened up a new view.

But enthusiasm of this kind found no favour



with Dr. Johnson, who observes, “Whether to plant a walk in undulating curves, and to place a bench at every turn where there is an object to catch the view; to make the water run where it will be heard, and to stagnate where it will be seen; to leave intervals where the eye will be pleased, and to thicken the plantation where there is something to be hidden, demands any great powers of mind, I will not inquire. Perhaps a sullen and surly spectator may think such performances rather the report than the business of human reason.”

An application, it is said, was made to Lord Bute to grant him a pension, but before his decision was known, Shenstone was carried off by a malignant fever, thus closing his days in an almost penniless condition through an immoderate gratification of a favourite hobby. Pope, again, made gardening a pleasant relief from his sedentary pursuits, and devoted his leisure moments to improving and beautifying his villa at Twickenham.

Addison deemed gardening worthy his regard, and like many other of our philosophers, poets, and men of taste, had an observant eye for the beautiful in nature. Indeed, he amused himself by comparing the different styles of gardening with those of poetry. “Your makers of parterres and flower-



gardens are epigrammatists and sonneteers; contrivers of bowers and grottoes, treillages and cascades, are romance writers;” while the gravel pits in Kensington Gardens, then just laid out, were heroic verse.\*

Gardening and planting were decided hobbies with Sir Walter Scott. Speaking to Captain Hall one day of the improvements which he had made at Abbotsford, he said, “You can have no idea of the exquisite delight of a planter—he is like a painter laying on his colours; at every moment he sees his effects coming out. There is no art or occupation comparable to this; it is full of past, present, and future enjoyment. I look back to the time when there was not a tree here, only bare heath; I look round and see thousands of trees growing up, all of which—I may say almost each of which—have received my personal attention. I remember five years ago looking forward, with the most delighted expectation, to this very hour, and as each year has passed the expectation has gone on increasing. I do the same now. I anticipate what this plantation, and that one, will presently be, if only taken care of, and there is not a spot of which I do not watch the progress.”

Farming, on the other hand, he disliked, for, as he added, “What have I to do with fattening,

\* See *Quarterly Review* lxx., 200-1.



and killing beasts, or raising corn only to cut it down, and to wrangle with farmers about prices, and to be constantly at the mercy of the seasons? There can be no such disappointments or annoyances in planting trees."

William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, was not only fond of gardening, but possessed great taste in laying out pleasure grounds and arranging flower beds—a Temple of Pan, for example, with the ornamental ground surrounding it, which were designed by him for his villa at South Lodge, Enfield Chase, are quoted by Whately, in his "*Observations on Modern Gardening*," as a very successful effort of bucolic art. With this source of recreation, he was one afternoon employed in ornamenting the grounds of a friend's villa in the neighbourhood of London, when some important despatches were handed to him, which required his earnest consideration. But so fascinated was he, by his occupation, that he not only continued the task he had set himself, but, even after darkness had set in, remained on the spot superintending, by the light from lanterns, the arrangement of the sticks which were intended to indicate where a shrub was to be planted, or a flower plot to be laid out.

What a strange contrast does this incident present compared to another that happened later on in the autumn of 1767, when Lord Chatham's



health had so seriously failed him. It seems that hopes had been entertained that his mysterious disorder might be ameliorated by his removal from North End, Hampstead, to Burton Pynsent. But the slightest thing irritated him, and it is related how a certain bleak hill offended his morbid fancies, and accordingly he ordered his gardener to plant it out with evergreens.

The man inquired with what description of evergreen.

“With cedars and cypresses,” was the reply.

The gardener, taken by surprise, replied, “Why, my lord, all the nursery gardens in the country would not supply a hundredth part.”

“No matter,” was the peremptory rejoinder, “send for them from London,” and the trees were actually, at a vast expense, brought by carriage from London.

Lord Macaulay, on retiring from Parliament in 1856, settled down at Holly Lodge, situated in the most secluded corner of the little labyrinth of bye-roads which, bounded to the east by Palace Gardens, and to the west by Holland House, constitutes the district known as Campden Hill. Here he took to gardening, ordering “the dead sprigs to be cleared from the lilacs, and the grass to be weeded of dandelions,” and tells how he “exterminated all the dandelions which had sprouted up since yesterday.”



These unlucky weeds play an important part in his correspondence with his young niece. "My dear little Alice," he writes, "I quite forgot my promised letter, but I assure you that you were never out of my mind for three waking hours together. I have, indeed, had little to put you, and yours, out of my thoughts; for I have been living these last ten days like Robinson Crusoe in his desert island. I have had no friends near me, but my books and my flowers, and no enemies but those execrable dandelions. I thought that I was rid of the villains; but, the day before yesterday, when I got up, and looked out of my window I could see five or six of their great, impudent, flaring, yellow faces turned up at me. 'Only you wait till I come down,' I said. How I grubbed them up! How I enjoyed their destruction! Is it Christian-like to hate a dandelion so savagely?"

On Christmas Day, 1856, he writes to his sister Fanny:—"The holiday interrupts my gardening. I have turned gardener; not indeed working gardener, but master gardener. I have just been putting creepers round my windows, and forming beds of rhododendrons round my fountain. In three or four summers, if I live so long, I may expect to see the result of my care."

On retiring from the Navy, Lord Collingwood returned to his estate in Northumberland, where,



as a mode of exercise, he spent part of his time in digging trenches in his garden like a daily labourer—a hobby in which he took considerable interest.

It seems, also, to have been owing to the taste for floriculture which John, Earl of Bute, instilled into the mind of his royal master, the Prince of Wales, that the public are now indebted for the unrivalled botanical gardens at Kew, which have proved such a popular resort to those interested in the habits, and growth of plants.

It would have been difficult to find a more enthusiastic lover of nature than Charles James Fox. In 1800 he came up from St. Anne's Hill at an important crisis on the understanding that he would have to remain only two nights in town. "But when," said Lord Holland, "he heard that the debate was postponed in consequence of Mr. Pitt's indisposition, he sat silent and overcome, as if the intelligence of some great calamity had reached his ears. I saw tears steal down his cheeks, so vexed was he at being detained from his garden, his books, and his cheerful life in the country." Writing in the following year, Fox says: "Never did a letter arrive at a worse time, my dear young one, than yours this morning. A sweet westerly wind, a beautiful sun, all the thorns and elms just budding, and the nightingales just beginning to sing; though the blackbirds and



thrushes would have been quite sufficient to have refuted any arguments in your letter."

Tradition has left us few pictures more charming than the life of Lord Bolingbroke at his country-house at Dawley. In this beautiful retreat he divided his time between his studies, his friends, and the recreations of country life. He planted and beautified his grounds, he shouldered a prong, and assisted his haymakers. Nor was this all, for he further amused himself with covering his summer-houses with texts from the Latin classics, and, to keep up the illusion, actually contracted with a painter to cover the walls of his entrance-hall with pictures of rural implements.

Who can question, too, Sir Richard Steele's love of a garden, after reading his admirable remarks in the *Tatler*? \* Speaking of the encroachment of artificial habits and the changes of modern hours compared with those of former times, he launches out in praise of the early, or what he calls the still hours of the day, in these terms :—"The mind in those early seasons of the day is so refreshed in all her faculties, and borne up with such new supplies of animal spirits, that she finds herself in a state of youth; above all, when the breath of flowers entertains her, the

\* No. 263.



melody of birds, the dews that hang upon the plants, and all those other sweets of nature that are so peculiar to the morning."

In his sketch, too, of the immortal portrait of Sir Roger de Coverley, the model country gentleman, he has referred still more pointedly to the charms of the country. In his paper on Sir Roger's courtship of the perverse widow, he says:—"To one used to live in a city, the charms of the country are so exquisite that the mind is lost in a certain transport which raises us above ordinary life, and is yet not strong enough to be inconsistent with tranquillity. This state of mind was I in, ravished with the murmur of waters, the whisper of breezes, the singing of birds; and whether I looked up to the heavens, down on the earth, or turned on the prospects around me, still struck with new sense of pleasure." \*

Horace Walpole and Daines Barrington, a younger son of the first Viscount Barrington, devoted much time to writing on the history of gardening. But the former appears to have had an idea that the only way to keep a garden in proper order was to put it all under glass, and then shut the owner in with it. "The way to ensure summer in England," he wrote in the year 1774, "is to have it framed and glazed."

\* *Spectator*, No. 118.



We have no right, he contended, to set up a claim to any such season as summer, the conception of it in the English mind resting on nothing more solid than a few conceits of the poets. But, as the *Quarterly Review*\* has remarked, Horace Walpole was troubled with the rheumatism and gout—two complaints which disturb accuracy of judgment. In ordinary years, we have a fair share of good weather, although the patience of the lover of gardens is often put to severe tests.

As a lover of nature, few men could have excelled Dr. Arnold; even a wood anemone, or spray of wood-sorrel, affording him immoderate delight. Indeed, the wild flowers on the mountain sides were to him, he said, “his music;” and which, whether in their scarcity at Rugby, or their profusion in Westmoreland, “loving them,” he used to say, “as a child loves them,” he could not bear to see removed from their natural places by the wayside, where others might enjoy them as well as himself. Equally devoted was Jeremy Bentham, and, looking into his garden, one might see him occasionally trotting along upon an “anteprandial circumgyration,” stopping to admire the flowers he was so fond of.

With all the violence of his dislikes and likings,

\* “Country Life,” 1884, clviii., 409.



Walter Savage Landor had the softness, and tenderness of the poetic temperament.\* He was a lover of all flowers, and delighted in a garden with its infinite variety of flowers—those “beautiful and peaceful tribes” he so often wished that he knew more about. As he with pathetic humour remarked, “they always meet one in the same place, at the same season; and years have no more effect on their placid countenances than on so many of the most favoured gods. I remember a little privet which I planted when I was about six years old, and which I considered the nearest of kin to me after my mother and elder sister. Whenever I returned from school or college, for the attachment was not stifled in that sink, I felt something like uneasiness till I had seen and measured it. There is no small delight in having a friend, in the world, to whom one dare repeat such folly.”

With a delight, adds Mr. Forster, “that may perhaps be measured by the surpassing beauty of the lines in which it is expressed, he repeated the folly in later years to a wider audience:—

And 'tis, and ever was, my wish and way  
To let all flowers live freely, and all die,  
Whene'er their Genius bids their souls depart  
Among their kindred in their native place.

\* “Walter Savage Landor,” John Forster, i., 13.



I never pluck the rose ; the violet's head  
 Hath shaken with my breath upon its bank  
 And not reproacht me ; the ever sacred cup  
 Of the pure lily hath between my hands  
 Felt safe, unsoil'd, nor lost one grain of gold.

Charles Robert Leslie, writes his son George, “ had a very pretty habit of going into the garden before breakfast, and picking either a honeysuckle, or a rose, his favourite flowers, and putting them in a glass on the mantel-shelf in his painting-room. I hardly ever saw his room in the summer without these flowers, and we have a little sketch of a rose, which he picked, and brought into the house so gently that he did not disturb a beautiful little moth on it.”

At the time of Norman Macleod's early ministry in Loudoun, his Manse was pitched on the summit of a wooded *brae*, beneath which ran the public road, with a sweet burn forming a sequestered and lovely *haugh*. His natural taste for flowers ripened here, says his brother,\* into a passion, which was in no small degree inflamed by an enthusiastic gardener, whose hobby was pansies, and dahlias. Often on a summer morning, “ early as the song of the lark, might the shrill voice of old Arnot be heard as, bending over a frame, he discussed with the minister the merits of some new bloom. A

\* “ Life of Norman Macleod,” by Rev. Donald Macleod, i., 121.



pretty flower-garden was soon formed, and a sweet summer-house, both destined to be associated, in the minds of many, with the recollection of conversations full of suggestive ideas as to social, literary, and religious questions, and enriched with marvellous bits of humorous personification, and glimpses of deep poetic feeling."

In one of the charming letters of Bishop Thirlwall to a friend, he remarks that "the want of time is the great misery of London life, greater on the whole than the banishment from the country." And yet the mere banishment was a severe penalty, for we find him continually regretting, when in London, that he will not be able to see his trees come into leaf, or the thorns into bloom; that "the glory of the spring has passed away, and even all my hayfields have been cleared."

In the later years of his life, Wedgwood's garden was his greatest hobby. His daughters shared his taste, and were his constant companions in greenhouse and garden. His friend Dr. Darwin selected his head-gardener, and Downes, as his name was, was his master's right hand. The numerous bills preserved, says Eliza Meteyard,\* "for what were then rare, and costly shrubs and flowers, though now common in our gardens, show what pains were lavished on this

\* "Life of Wedgwood," ii., 600.



part of the adornment of Etruria." At this time the cultivation of fruit under glass was yet but in its infancy ; and we are told how Wedgwood would occasionally cut off a tempting branch of hot-house grapes, and hand it down with a triumphant "There!"

Gardening afforded the eminent engineer, George Stephenson, unfeigned delight, which was only broken at times by the obstinacy of his cucumbers, which persisted in growing crooked. To rectify their unruly conduct, he had some long glass jars constructed, into which he would place them, remarking with a feeling of pride, "I think I have bothered them noo." As a gardener, Sir Henry Raeburn showed considerable skill, in addition to being a learned and enthusiastic florist, in the pursuit of which he made numerous experiments.

In his domestic retirement, William Wilberforce enjoyed his garden, flowers possessing a special charm for him. "Who that ever joined him in his hour of daily exercise cannot see him now as he walked round his garden at Highwood," writes his son, "now in animated and even playful conversation, and then drawing from his copious pockets (to contain Dalrymple's State Papers was their standard measure) a Psalter, a Horace, a Shakespeare, or Cowper,



and reading or reciting chosen passages, and then catching at long-stored flower leaves as the wind blew them from the pages, or standing by a favourite gum cistus to repair the loss.

“Then he would point out the harmony of the tints, the beauty of the pencilling, and the perfection of the colouring, and sum up all into those ascriptions of praise to the Almighty which were ever welling from his grateful heart. He loved flowers with all the simple delight of childhood. He would hover from bed to bed over his favourites, and when he came in, even from his shortest walk, he deposited a few that he had gathered safely in his room before he joined the breakfast table. Often would he say as he enjoyed their fragrance—‘How good is God to us! What should we think of a friend who had furnished us with a magnificent house and all we needed, and then, coming to see that all had been provided according to his wishes, should be hurt to find that no scents had been placed in the rooms? Yet so has God dealt with us—lovely flowers are the smiles of His goodness.’”\*

As a horticulturist, Warren Hastings gained some eminence. His gardens at Daylesford were perfect models of that graceful style which, “owing all its beauties to the skill of the artist,

\* “Life of William Wilberforce,” 1838.



yet appears to be the production of untutored nature." He took infinite pains, moreover, to procure the seeds of plants which he had admired when growing in India, and which he believed were capable of being reared, and brought to perfection, in England. In all the pursuits of agriculture he took an equal interest, breeding horses, fattening bullocks, rearing sheep, and exhibiting in each of these occupations not less of knowledge than of enthusiasm. In much the same way, John Howard, the philanthropist, showed his fondness for gardening by the cultivation of plants, vegetables, and fruits. And such was the taste he displayed, writes his biographer,\* "that his gardens and grounds were objects of curiosity, both for the skill with which they were laid out, and the variety of some of their productions."

In his years of leisure, James Watt amused himself with gardening, and agricultural pursuits, and, even in his busy days, his first occupation on returning home from any absence was to walk round his garden, "followed by his gardener, surveying his fruit trees, and commenting on their progress and produce. Equally fond was he of flowers, and not without some knowledge of botany." John Locke, who was naturally

\* James Baldwin Brown, *Memoirs* by, 1818, 655.



very active, sometimes took pleasure in working in his garden, the management of which he understood thoroughly. But his health prevented him taking much active exercise.

Botany was the favourite occupation of Sir Joseph Banks, and one to which his leisure hours were devoted with enthusiastic ardour and perseverance. An amusing anecdote is related of him in connection with his botanical researches. Being, on one occasion, intent on exploring ditches, and secluded spots, in search of rare plants, he excited the suspicions of some peasants, who, conceiving that he could have no innocent design in acting thus, seized the enthusiastic naturalist when he had fallen asleep, exhausted with fatigue, and brought him before a neighbouring magistrate. After a strict, and careful, inquiry he was soon liberated, but the incident occasioned no small amusement in the neighbourhood. His love of botany naturally led him to take interest in all matters connected with gardening, flowers in any shape having a charm for him which is not equally realized by the unscientific mind.

At an early age William Roscoe, whose literary merits, as is well known, were very considerable, evinced a love for flowers, botany never ceasing to be the study and recreation of his leisure



hours. Sir James Smith, on his first introduction to him, writes his son,\* expressed his surprise at finding him “so good a practical botanist.” Like his friend the illustrious President of the Linnæan Society, he, too, was an ardent disciple of the great Swede, “and defended the Linnæan fortress as stoutly as he could do.”

A great resource and enjoyment to George Crabbe was botany, the study of which filled up many a leisure hour. Ever fond of flowers, he was naturally induced to study them scientifically. And yet he lacked method; and according to his son, “within the house was a kind of scientific confusion; in the garden the usual showy foreigners gave place to the most scarce flowers, and especially to the rarer weeds, of Britain; and these were scattered here and there, only for preservation. In fact, he neither loved order for its own sake nor had any very high opinion of that passion in others.

“Whenever he happened to be at Cambridge he generally haunted the Botanic Garden, having a strong partiality for the Curator, Mr. James Down.

“‘Down is —, Down is,—’ said he one day, seeking an appropriate epithet,—

\* “Life of Wm. Roscoe,” ii., 453.



“ ‘A man,’ replied his wife, and it was agreed that this was the very word. The worthy Curator knew Crabbe’s character, and whenever he rang at the gate for admission to pass the morning in detecting such duplicates of plants as could be well spared from the garden, Down would receive him with a grave, benevolent smile, which said, ‘Dear sir, you are freely welcome to wander where, and to select what you will; I am sure you will do us no injury.’ ”\*

Dr. Carey, the famous missionary, was a botanist, and in Serampore the one recreation which he allowed himself was his garden. Indeed, this, we are told, with its tropical glories and more modest exotics, every one of which was as a personal friend, and to him had an individual history, was more than a place of recreation.

His garden was, in short, “his oratory, the scene of prayer and meditation, the place where he began and ended the day of light—with God.”

His son Jonathan, writing in 1836, says:—  
“His fondness for his garden remained to the last. No one was allowed to interfere in the arrangements of this his favourite retreat; and it is here he enjoyed his most pleasant moments of secret devotion, and meditation. The arrangements made by him were on the Linnæan system;

\* “Life of G. Crabbe,” by his son, 1834, 171.



and to disturb the bed or border of the garden was to touch the apple of his eye. The garden formed the best and rarest collection of plants in the East, to the extension of which, by his correspondence with persons of eminence in Europe, his attention was constantly directed; and in return he supplied his correspondents with rare collections from the East. It was painful to observe with what distress my father quitted this scene of his enjoyment, when extreme weakness, during his last illness, prevented his going to his favourite retreat. Often, when he was unable to walk, he was drawn into the garden in a chair placed on a board with four wheels."

As a recreation, gardening afforded much amusement to Cowper. When his health failed, it became a daily increasing hobby, and with his own hands he constructed a greenhouse, in which he trained his tropical plants and flowers. Writing to Mr. Newton, he says, "I might date my letter from the greenhouse, which we have converted into a summer parlour. The walls hung with garden mats, and the floor covered with a carpet, the sun, too, in a great measure excluded by an awning of mats which forbids him to shine anywhere except upon the carpet, it affords us by far the pleasantest retreat in Olney." It was fortunate for Cowper that his tastes lay in this



direction, affording him an opportunity of relieving his fevered brain, amidst surroundings whose peaceful influence could not but materially benefit him.

Archbishop Whately's love of gardening was proverbial. He generally made two daily circuits in his grounds, attended by a ponderous stock, with a steel blade at the end, with which he lopped off decayed branches. He was very skilful in grafting, and his domain at Redesdale contained as many as a thousand specimens of his skill. When cutting down trees or grafting, the Archbishop wore an apron—a veritable bishop's apron—which had been worn out in episcopal service, or at least had become too shabby to wear.

When engaged one day in his gardening operations, a friend referred, among other matters, to the great change in the medical treatment of lunatics introduced by Pinel, who instead of the strait waistcoat and such like contrivances, awarded to each patient healthful and agreeable occupation, including agriculture and gardening.

“I think gardening would be a dangerous indulgence for lunatics,” observed the Archbishop.

“How so?” asked his friend, somewhat astonished.



“Because they might grow *madder*,” was the witty rejoinder.

Poor Leigh Hunt during his imprisonment found untold pleasure in his little garden, which he thus describes in his *Autobiography*\* :—  
 “There was a little yard outside the room, railed off from another belonging to the neighbouring ward. This yard I shut in with green palings, adorned it with a trellis, bordered it with a thick bed of earth from a nursery, and even contrived to have a grass plot. The earth I filled with flowers, and young trees. There was an apple from which we managed to get a pudding the second year. As to my flowers, they were allowed to be perfect. Thomas Moore, who came to see me with Lord Byron, told me he had seen no such heart’s-ease. I bought the *Parnaso Italiano* while in prison, and used often to think of a passage, whilst looking at this miniature piece of horticulture :—

“My little garden,  
 To me thou’rt vineyard, field, and meadow, and wood.”

Turning to agriculture, it may be remembered how enthusiastic Lord John Russell was in its praises. “In a moral point of view,” he writes, “the life of the agriculturist is the most pure and holy of any class of men ; pure, because it is the

\* 1850, ii., 148-49.



most healthful, and vice can hardly find time to contaminate it; and holy, because it brings the Deity perpetually before his view, giving him thereby the most exalted notions of supreme power, and the most fascinating, and endearing view, of moral benignity." He further adds—

"The agriculturist views the Deity in His works; he contemplates the divine economy in the arrangements of the seasons; and he hails *nature* immediately presiding over every object that strikes his eyes. He witnesses many of her great, and beauteous, operations, and her reproductive faculties; his heart insensibly expands, from his minute acquaintance with multifarious objects, all in themselves original; whilst that degree of retirement in which he is placed from the bustling haunts of mankind, keeps alive in his breast his natural affections, unblunted by an extensive, and perpetual, intercourse with man in a more enlarged, and therefore in a more corrupt state of society."

Burke's knowledge of farming led his neighbours frequently to apply to him for advice upon such matters. On one occasion he surprised a distinguished politician, who was visiting him, by entering into a history of rural affairs, of the rents, taxes, and variations in the poor-rates of fifty parishes in the county during several consecutive years; as well as improvements in tillage



and grazing. Early in the year 1795, from the appearance of the young wheat, he predicted an insufficient harvest; and being discredited, he carried a large quantity of green ears in his carriage to exhibit to certain incredulous friends. Harvest-home was always celebrated with great merry-making at Butler's Court, the family mingling with the humbler guests in the gaiety and sports.

John Horne Tooke, whose active and enterprising mind was always panting after occupation, amongst other pursuits, applied both his mental, and bodily, powers to his favourite amusement, agriculture. Accordingly he purchased a small estate at Witton, near Huntingdon, and busied himself "in draining his farm, in introducing the meliorating grasses, in rearing cabbages for his cattle, and in managing his corn-lands, according to the best principles of drill husbandry." But his prospects of agricultural renown were suddenly blighted by a violent, and acute attack, of ague, which rendered a speedy retreat back to London absolutely necessary. Luckily for him, the gentleman, from whom he had bought the house and land, returned about this period from the Continent, and being attached to the spot, he repurchased his estate.

Curious to say, the Duke of Bridgewater would have neither conservatory, pinery, flower-garden,



nor shrubbery at Worsley; and once, on his return from London, finding some flowers which had been planted in his absence, he whipped their heads off with his cane, and ordered them to be rooted up. The only new things introduced about the place were some Turkey oaks, with which his character seemed to have more sympathy.\*

When out of harness, Sir Ralph Abercromby lived a retired and simple life in the country, finding active occupation in the management of a small farm. He not only took a practical, but a scientific, interest in what was to him a pleasant pastime, acquiring a knowledge of the different schemes of agricultural improvement, which at that time engaged the public attention.

The story of William Cobbett's planting and seed-farming would make an interesting volume. His little estate on the banks of the Hamble, by the consolidation of two or three small farms, and the replanting of a large portion of the ground with oak, thorn, ash, acacia, etc., was the outline of a plan which engaged much of his attention, when unoccupied by more important affairs. These rural operations, it would seem, attracted the notice of the Surveyor to the Board of Agriculture, and we read how "Mr. Cobbett has been most particularly fortunate in raising, chiefly from seed, a vast nursery of

\* "Lives of the Engineers," Smiles, i., 412.



almost all the different sorts of forest trees known on the Atlantic side of the middle States of North America. The vast variety of strong and flourishing plants, which his seed-bed of oaks exhibited in the course of the last summer, bids fair to render his success on this occasion of much importance to our country," etc.

When there was a talk of a grand demonstration at Westminster to celebrate Sir Francis Burdett's election, Mr. Cobbett was in no hurry to be dragged away from his beloved fields into "the cursed smoke," as he calls it. Writing on the matter, he says:—"Now, as to the dinner, it is dreadfully distressing for me to go; for, the season being so awkward, has thrown the oak-cutting into this week, and the two succeeding ones, and you will easily guess how necessary my personal attendance is while it lasts. Yet I will go, if alive and well; but I must go up on the Sunday and come back on the Tuesday, for I cannot be longer absent."

Cobbett's heart indeed was in his agricultural pursuits, and, as Mr. E. Smith\* remarks, "there never lived, probably, a writer to equal him in rural description; one who could, in the midst of some angry polemic, so readily turn off for a moment and present his reader with a country picture, perfectly life-like, glowing

\* "William Cobbett," 1878, ii., 63, 65-66, 235.



with colour and realism ; who could make a mere gardening-book entertaining."

But, curious to say, Cobbett had a particular aversion to the potato :—" This root is become a favourite because it is the suitable companion of filth and misery. It can be seized hold of before it be half ripe, it can be raked out of the ground with the paws, and without the help of any utensils, except, perhaps, a stick to rake it from the fire, can be conveyed into the stomach, in the space of an hour. We have but one step farther to go, and that is, to eat it raw, side by side with our bristly fellow-creatures, who, by-the-bye, reject it as long as they can get at any species of grain, or at any other vegetable. I can remember when the first acre of potatoes was planted in a field, in the neighbourhood of the place where I was born ; and I very well remember that even the poorest of the people would not eat them. They called them hog-potatoes ; but now they are become a considerable portion of the diet of those who raise the bread for others to eat."

Lord Lyndhurst was fond of the country, and took great pleasure in his house and farm at Turville. He liked farming, but " did not make it profitable, for he was more curious in experiments than fortunate in bringing good crops from his land." " I have often been amused," writes Miss Stewart, " by playful contests between him,



and his lively and devoted wife, on the mysteries of manuring and cattle feeding. His arguments were always the strongest, but his theories often broke down when put in practice."

This lady further tells us how "on a warm summer day he much enjoyed having the dinner-table laid under a fine spreading beech near the house, and would be overflowing in talk and spirits during the repast. One day, when thus *al fresco*, just as we were sitting down, a thrush, undisturbed by our presence, trilled out from its hidden bough its lovely song, as it seemed to us, with unusual clearness and sweetness. 'The thrush says grace for us,' said my lord, and the bird, as if in answer, took up again its joyous carol. I could see that Lord Lyndhurst was quite affected by it."

Viscount Eversley, the distinguished Speaker of the House of Commons, as a relief from his political duties, devoted himself to practical farming, and gardening. The gardens of Heckfield were among the shows of the county, and never was their master so happy as when, surrounded by his friends, he could point out some new triumph of the gardener's art—a further encroachment of the velvet lawn upon the park, a pattern flower bed, a scarce variety of pear, or grapes fit for the table every day in the year.



## CHAPTER XII.

### HOBBIES.

Lord Brougham—William Pitt—William Wilberforce—Sir Walter Scott—Archbishop Whately—Canning—Warren Hastings—Jacob Bryant—Robert Burns—Lord Stratford de Redcliffe—Lord Derby—Earl Beaconsfield—Lord Normanby—Earl Russell—Lord Palmerston—Charles Robert Leslie—Telford—John Smeaton—James Nasmyth—Dr. Parr—Erasmus Darwin—George Crabbe—Thomas Gray—William Roscoe—Walpole—John, Earl of Bute—George Romney—Jeremy Bentham—Henry Martin—John Rennie—David Livingstone—Baron Pollock—Lord Strangford—De Quincey—Sir William Hamilton—Shelley—Sir Charles Wheatstone—Dr. Adam—Josiah Wedgwood—Earl Liverpool—Sir Charles Bell—Haden—David Allan.

ACCORDING to Lord Brougham, who amused himself in his old age by the study of mathematics, varied by optics and natural theology, any man is fortunate who has a hobby-horse, for, generally speaking, such a taste is through life a constant source of pleasure. Indeed, a man with a hobby has ample resources in himself for amusement; and oftentimes, when failing health overtakes



him, or his declining days set in, he finds a never-failing source of happiness. It is true that in a variety of instances men have had ridiculous hobbies, but making due allowance for the many-sidedness of the human mind, it must be admitted that one of a man's best friends is his hobby. As a relaxation, enticing the busy man of life from his daily routine of work, the hobby is productive of health, relieving the brain from the tension which it only too frequently undergoes when in harness. Thus instances meet us on all sides of celebrated personages enjoying relief from the "hum and buzz" of life in their favourite pursuit. Whether it be Nero constructing his hydraulic clocks, or Prince Rupert experimenting in his laboratory, or Philip of Burgundy contriving houses full of *diableries*, such as hidden trap-doors, undermined floors, and the like, we find the same habit illustrated among men of every age and country.

Thus even the stately Bolingbroke, as we learn from one of Pope's letters, was not above shouldering a prong, and even Burke loved to snatch an hour from his ever-engrossing politics by sharing the labours of his farm-servants. Like Mr. Gladstone, Pitt was a woodman; and, when he was carrying on the government of



the country, he would now and then spend a day or two at his country house near Hayes Common, and, sallying out with Wilberforce, would hew out new walks among the old trees of the Holwood copses.

According to Lockhart, Sir Walter Scott "was an expert as well as powerful wielder of the axe, and competed with his ablest subalterns as to the paucity of blows by which a tree could be brought down. The wood rang ever and anon with laughter while he shared their labours, and if he had taken, as he every now and then did, a whole day with them, they were sure to be invited home to Abbotsford to sup gaily with Tom Purdie." They were jovial days, and the memories of them long clung to the neighbourhood where the once-familiar voice has long been silent. Then there was Archbishop Whately, who occasionally would fell a tree, telling his friends that this was far more health-giving to him than a dose of medicine. Anyhow, the exercise generally had the desired effect, and soon made him feel better when he happened to be out of sorts.

Literary pursuits have always been a source of amusement. Thus Wm. Pitt studied the Greek and Latin classics on one occasion when out of office, and Canning on a similar occasion translated the



Odes and Satires of Horace. According to Mr. Gleig, "a copy of verses was as natural an operation" to Warren Hastings "as his morning meal," and Edward Jenner had the same taste. Jacob Bryant, one of the ripest scholars of his time, and an especial favourite of George III., delighted in writing Latin verses, very few being superior to him in his day. A Latin poem of his production on the Gin Act, composed after the model of Virgil, and printed in the "*Musæ Etonenses*," is one of the happiest specimens of his merits as a classical versifier. As a writer of English verse, his compositions, says Mr. Jesse,\* "were seemingly confined to a few lively and scattered trifles, produced either for his own amusement or for that of his friends, an ode 'To a Pair of Stockings,' and another one 'To a Cat,' being the titles of the only two which we remember to have seen recorded."

Robert Burns delighted in extempore versification, and James Watt, in his early life, was somewhat of a poet. Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, when Mr. Stratford Canning, employed sometimes his leisure moments in writing verses.† They were of decided merit, and attracted the notice of Byron, who remarked, in reference to

\* "*Celebrated Etonians*," i., 325.

† Smiles, "*Life and Labour*," 315.



his lines on Bonaparte, that they “were worth a thousand odes of anybody’s.” “I was aware,” he added, “that he was a man of talent, but did not suspect him of possessing all the family talents in such perfection.” Then there was the late Lord Derby, who was fond of the old classics, and his translation of Homer’s *Iliad* was a scholarly production which, apart from his political career, greatly enhanced his reputation.

Another ministerial author, whose name—independently of politics—will long be revered by the English people, was Earl Beaconsfield. Like Lord Brougham, he was a busy and indefatigable author; and, although necessarily hard-worked by reason of his Parliamentary duties, he found time to bequeath to posterity that long list of standard works which will always be read with pride by succeeding generations. Among further ministerial authors, says Mr. Smiles,\* “were Lord Normanby, who wrote the novel entitled ‘No;’ Earl Russell, who produced a tragedy (‘Don Carlos’) and a novel (‘The Nun of Arronea’), both very inferior productions. Lord Palmerston had the credit of producing several excellent *jeu d’esprit* in the ‘New Whig Guide,’ while Lord Liverpool was Minister.” Telford, the engineer, indulged in his taste for poetry, one of his most

\* “Life and Labour,” 316.



successful compositions being a translation of the "Ode to May," from Buchanan's Latin poems.

Charles Robert Leslie took great interest in astronomy. His knowledge of this science was very slight, but the pleasure he had in the various appearances in the heavens was unbounded, so much so that he used to say an eclipse seemed to take place on purpose for his pleasure. "He once said to me," adds his son, "that he thought it very likely that part of our happiness in the next life would be derived from finding out the wonders of the creation which are hidden to us here."\* John Smeaton made astronomy his hobby. He fitted up an observatory in his own house, which he furnished with some curious instruments of his own making. James Nasmyth, the inventor of the steam-hammer, also applied himself to astronomy, making his own telescopes, and by his own observations he achieved much distinction in astronomical science.†

Dr. Parr's hobby was church bells. Not only did he study their history from the period of their first introduction into the Christian Church, about the sixth century, but he investigated the various uses—rational or superstitious—to which they

\* "Biographical Recollections of C. R. Leslie," by Tom Taylor, Introduction, xviii.

† Smiles' "Life and Labour," 17.



have been applied. He could also tell the number, weight, names, and qualities of almost all the principal bells in England, and even in Europe. Of his own fondness for bells he speaks in the following extract from a letter to Mr. Roscoe, dated Hatton, July 20, 1807 :—"It so happens that from my youth upwards, even to this hour, I have been a distinguished adept in the noble art of ringing; that I have equal delight with Milton in the sound of bells; that I have far superior knowledge in the science of casting them; and that my zeal for accomplishing my favourite object is very great."

George Crabbe had a passion for science, and he could at all times find luxury in the most dry and forbidding calculations. As a young man, an amusing anecdote is told of the awkward position into which his anatomical tastes led him, for he narrowly escaped being brought before the Lord Mayor as a resurrectionist. His landlady, having discovered that he had a dead child in his closet for the purpose of dissection, took it into her head that it was no other than an infant whom she had the misfortune to lose the week before. "Dr. Crabbe had dug up William; she was certain he had; and to the Mansion House he must go." Fortunately the countenance of the child had not yet been touched with the knife.



The "doctor" arrived when the tumult was at its height, and, opening the closet door, at once established his innocence of the charge.

A thorough master of heraldry was Thomas Gray, his skill in zoology and etymology having been extremely accurate. Voyages and travels of all sorts were, too, his favourite amusements; and he further had a taste for painting, prints, and architecture. Gray had a great horror of fire, which induced him to take up a hobby that caused some little amusement. "He has ever since kept a ladder of ropes by him," writes the Rev. John Sharp, "soft as the silky coras by which Romeo ascended to his Juliet, and has had an iron machine fixed to his bedroom window. The other morning Lord Percival and some members of Peter House, going a hunting, were determined to have a little sport before they set out, and thought it would be no bad diversion to make Gray bolt, as they called it; so ordered their man, Joe Draper, to roar out 'Fire!' A delicate white night-cap is said to have appeared at the window, but finding the mistake, retired again to the couch. The young fellows, had he descended, were determined, they said, to have whipped the butterfly up again."

A similar anecdote used to be told by Samuel Rogers of a nervous old gentleman whose hobby



was fire-escapes; these being a kind of sack in which he could cover himself at once from his window. Being suddenly awakened one night by the sound, as he thought, of the wheels of a fire-engine, followed by a tremendous knocking at the door, he instantly, with the greatest possible haste, descended in his sack and reached the street just in time to hand his wife, who had been to the opera, out of her carriage.

One of Erasmus Darwin's pet hobbies was mechanical invention, constant allusions to which occur in his letters to Josiah Wedgwood. But he rarely completed anything, with the exception of a horizontal windmill for grinding flints, which he designed for Wedgwood. Another invention was a small carriage of peculiar construction, intended to give the best effect to the power of the horse, combined with the greatest ease in turning. "It was a platform," says Miss Seward,\* "with a seat fixed upon a very high pair of wheels, and supported in the front upon the back of the horse by means of a kind of proboscis, which, forming an arch, reached over the hind quarters of the horse, and passed through a ring—placed on an upright piece of iron—which worked on a socket, fixed in the saddle." However correct this carriage may have been in principle, Darwin,

\* "Life of Erasmus Darwin."



in 1768, was upset in it, breaking his knee-cap, and ever after limping a little.

William Roscoe possessed a considerable knowledge of Art, and for many years collected engravings, his idea being to illustrate the rise and progress of the various branches of Art, and thus to form, as it were, a School of Art, in which its history might be studied with pleasure and advantage. Speaking of Art, Walpole's memorable collection—his historic pictures, his marbles, his rare books, his priceless engravings, his mediæval armour, his unique gems and enamels—has long become proverbial, although long since dispersed far and wide. Then there was John, Earl of Bute, who was another great collector. Charles Fox was of opinion that as a collector of pictures and works of *vertu* he was a "still more magnificent man" than his contemporary, Lord Lansdowne. In addition also to his fine library, he was the lucky possessor of a cabinet of mathematical instruments, and of astronomical and philosophical apparatus which was considered to be one of the most complete in Europe.

George Romney delighted in science, and Jeremy Bentham had his workshop, where he devoted many hours together to his experiments. Henry Martin was fond of mathematics, to which often in his leisure hours he studiously applied



himself. Indeed, "his mathematical acquisitions," says his biographer, "clearly left him without a rival of his own age, and yet, to have known only the employments of his more free and unfettered moments, would have led to the conclusion that the classics and poetry were his predominant passion." He had a versatile mind, and one which could easily adapt itself to existing circumstances.

The eminent engineer and architect, John Rennie, was another great collector, and had a fine collection of mathematical and astronomical instruments.

David Livingstone, apart from his missionary enterprise, was fond of science. Among the many incidental allusions to this his favourite hobby, recorded in his "Life,"\* we may quote the following letter, wherein he tells Mr. Watt, writing in 1845 :—"I have written to Professor Buckland and sent him specimens too, but have not received any answer. I have a great lot by me now. I don't know whether he received my letter or not. Can you ascertain? I am trying to procure specimens of the entire geology of this region (Mabotsa), and will try and make a sort of chart. I am taking double specimens. The great difficulty is transmission. Call on Professor

\* W. G. Blaikie, 83.



Owen, and ask him if he wants anything in the four jars I still possess of either rhinoceros, camelopard, etc. If he wants these, or anything else these jars will hold, he must send me more jars and spirits of wine." But one of the boxes of specimens was lost on the railway after reaching England in the custody of a friend. "The thief thought the box contained bullion, no doubt. You may think of one of the faces in *Punch* as that of the scoundrel when he found in the box a lot of 'chucky-stones.' "

Baron Pollock's pastime was mathematics, in which he displayed considerable aptitude, and Lord Strangford's principal recreations were geography and philology.

Among other peculiarities, De Quincey vexed and worried himself about the smallest trifles. Even the greasy, crumpled, Scotch one-pound notes annoyed him. He did his best to smooth and cleanse them before parting with them, and he washed and polished shillings up to their pristine brightness before he gave them away. But he was not equally neat with his papers, upon which he set a morbid value, being in the habit of accumulating these till, to quote his own words, "he was snowed up." With such hobbies he was not a reassuring man, we are told,\* for

\* "De Quincey's Life and Writings," H. A. Page, i., 364.



nervous people to live with, as those nights were exceptions on which he didn't set something on fire, the commonest incident being for someone to look up from work or book to say casually, "Papa, your hair is on fire," of which a calm "Is it, my love?" and a hand rubbing out the blaze, was all the notice taken.

One evening a maid rushed in upon two quiet girls with a horrified face, and in a burst of smoke, to announce that Mr. De Quincey's room, by this time on the point of being "snowed up," was on fire. Some important papers and a little money were secured; but De Quincey would have no water used, as it would have ruined his beloved papers. All he would take in was a heavy rug, locking the door after him in dread of the abhorred water being poured in.

The mechanical turn of Sir William Hamilton's mind had, from his early boyhood, found an outlet in the construction of kites, for which among juveniles he was famous. Two of his productions in this line had a traditionary fame, and were always reported as marvels of Art.\* The one was an immense fellow, and the other a very small one, but of elaborate construction. One of intermediate size was regularly carried to the country. When it rose in successful flight from the sands of Leven, or the uplands of Lanark-

\* "Memoir of Sir W. Hamilton," J. Veitch, 1869, 359.



shire, amidst the plaudits of the youngsters, it was difficult to say whether they, or the constructor himself, had the greater enjoyment. This, adds his biographer, was but the outcome of a part of his character, which was not so generally known or understood as the sterner side.

An unconventional amusement of this kind reminds us of Shelley's aquatic fancies, and the almost childish eagerness with which he pursued them through all the changing phases of his poetry. Have we not here, it has been suggested, the clue to much of his most beautiful and most frequently recurring imagery? Thus one of his few early friends writes of his aquatic hobby:—"He was a devoted worshipper of the water-nymphs, for whenever he found a pool, or even a small puddle, he would linger near it, and it was no easy task to get him from it. He twisted a morsel of paper in a form that a lively fancy might consider a likeness of a boat, and committing it to the water, he anxiously watched the fortunes of the frail bark, which, if it was not soon swamped by the faint winds, and the miniature ocean, gradually imbibed water through its porous sides, and sank. Sometimes, however, the fairy vessel performed its little voyage, and reached the opposite shore of the puny ocean in safety.

"It is astonishing with what keen delight he



engaged in this singular pursuit. So long as his paper lasted, he remained rivetted to the spot, fascinated by this peculiar amusement; all waste paper was rapidly consumed, then the covers of letters, next letters of little value. The most precious contributions of the most esteemed correspondents, although eyed wistfully many times and often returned to the pocket, were sure to be sent at last in pursuit of his former squadrons." Each craft of Shelley's little Armada was, after all, the type of some fairy vessel, like that of the witch of the *Atlas* —

Now lingering on the pools, in which abode  
The calm and darkness of the deep content,  
In which they paused : now o'er the shallow road  
Of white and dancing waters, all besprent  
With sand and polished pebbles—mortal boat  
In such a shallow rapid could not float,

or, that which conveys the disembodied spirits of  
Laon and Cythna :—

Sometimes between the wide and flowering meadows,  
Mile after mile we sail'd, and 'twas delight  
To see far off the sunbeams chase the shadows  
Over the grass : sometimes beneath the night  
Of wide and vaulted caves, whose roofs were bright  
With starry gems.

It was through pursuing a hobby in his leisure hours that Sir Charles Wheatstone was led to experiment on electricity. Originally a maker of



musical instruments, he investigated the science of sound theoretically and practically, and was thereby induced to study other branches of natural philosophy, devoting his spare moments to making certain toys to illustrate the subject of electricity.

*A propos* of his experiments, Mr. S. C. Hall, in his "Retrospect of a Long Life," says:—"One evening when I was present, there came to the house of John Martin, the painter, a young man, who greatly amused the party by making a doll dance upon the grand piano, and he excited a laugh when he said:—'You will be surprised if I tell you it is done by lightning.' It was Mr. Charles Wheatstone, afterwards Sir Charles Wheatstone, F.R.S. In that doll, perhaps, the first suggestion of the electric telegraph lay hidden—the germ of a discovery that has belted the globe with an electric zone, of a thousandfold, more marvellous character than that which Pack promised to put about the earth in forty minutes."

Dr. Adam, the well-known author of "Roman Antiquities" and other works, was accustomed to spend many hours in the shop of his friend Booge, the famous cutler, sometimes grinding knives and scissors, at other times driving the wheel. One day two University students called on Booge, who



was a good classic, to consult him on a certain passage they could not understand. Finding that the passage was a difficult one, being a wag, he said to the students, "Oh, it's quite simple. My labouring man at the wheel yonder will translate it for you. John," he cried, "come here a moment, will you?" The apparent labourer came forward, and, putting on his spectacles, "examined the passage, and proceeded to give a learned exposition of the passage, in the course of which he cited several scholastic authors in support of his views as to its proper translation." Having done so, he returned to the cutler's wheel, much to the astonishment of the students, who remarked that they had heard much of the erudition of the Edinburgh tradesmen, but what they had listened to was beyond anything they could have anticipated.\*

Josiah Wedgwood made conchology one of his special studies, and formed an admirable collection of shells. From the year 1778 may be traced his adaptation of these exquisite natural forms to his art. The flatter or valve-like shells were copied for plates, whilst the larger and occasionally more consolidated served as basins, baskets, and dishes. Collecting books, too, was one of his favourite recreations. Chest

\* Smiles' "Life and Labour," 18-19.



after chest found their way into Staffordshire, but time was often wanted to unpack and arrange them, much less to read them. On one occasion he writes to his friend Bentley :—" I thank you for the catalogues, but have not had time to read a page. My wife says I must buy no more books till I build another house, and advises me first to read some of those I have already. What nonsense she sometimes talks !" Yet in spite of this remonstrance the old taste still prevailed.

Charles Jenkinson, Earl of Liverpool, studied coins in his leisure hours ; and, on his " Treatise on the Coins of the Realm," the *Edinburgh Reviewer* thus wrote :—" It is pleasing to find one who must necessarily have been bred among the exploded doctrines of the elder economists shaking himself almost quite loose from their influence, at an advanced period of life, and betraying, whilst he resumes the favourite speculations of his early life, so little bias towards errors which he must once have imbibed. It is no less gratifying to observe one who has been educated in the walks of practical policy, and grown old amidst the bustle of public employments, embellishing the decline of life by pursuits which unite the dignity of science with the usefulness of active exertion."

In sketching, Sir Charles Bell found a congenial



recreation, and it may be remembered that Mr. Haden, the surgeon, while carrying on a large London practice, pursued his favourite hobby of etching. In course of time he proved himself possessed of considerable talent in this his usual pastime, and what had simply been a means of recreation now became to him a considerable source of profit.

Then there was David Allan, popularly known as the "Scottish Hogarth." His hobby of drawing originated in an accident. Having burnt his foot, he amused himself with drawing on the floor with a piece of chalk, a mode of passing his time which soon obtained a fascination for him. On his return to school he drew a caricature of his schoolmaster punishing a pupil, which caused him to be summarily expelled. But his success as an artist was decided, for the caricature was considered so clever that he was sent to Glasgow to study Art.

His love of science influenced even the arrangements of Assheton Smith's household. At Tedworth, at Vœnol, and at his London house, he devised a railroad from the kitchen to his dining-room, along which the dishes passed and repassed, and by this means he obviated the necessity of the servants quitting the room and the consequent delay. At Vœnol, writes Sir J.



Eardley Wilmot,\* “the train arriving with its savoury load opened a trap-door at the end of the dining-room. This closed of itself immediately after the admission of the course, and thus no inconvenience arose from the smell of cooking, which frequently penetrates open doors and passages in the largest houses. The weight of the empty dishes going down, as in the case of the slate waggons at Llanberris, brought upon the platform within the dining-room, by means of diminutive connecting ropes, the hot and smoking trucks coming up.”

Latterly, too, we are further told, when suffering from asthma, he had an ingenious mechanical contrivance, by which he was raised to his bedroom, on one of the upper floors, as he always entertained a great objection to sleeping on the ground floor. He was also fond of weighing himself, and had scales both at Tedworth and at his seat in Wales.

\* “Reminiscences of T. Assheton Smith,” 168.



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